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Australia's magazine of the performing arts, September 1980 \$1.95*

Theatre Australia

**CAN'T STOP THE
MUSIC**

— Music Drama's
revival

PETER NICHOLLS

— West End playwright

**DRAMA AND THE
MEDIA**

— plays on radio & TV

**DANCE THEATRE
OF HARLEM**

— review of season

**QTC'S 10TH
ANNIVERSARY**

THE EARTHLING

— Film review

John Waters
and Jacki Weaver in
**THEY'RE PLAYING
OUR SONG**



SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY
PREMIERE SEASON 1980



THEIR OWN SOUTH GEORGE JAM
 CLOSE OF PLAY 1981 FEB-MARCH
 MONUMENTS NO BACK DRILL
 THE SETTING MYSTIC TRUTHS 1981 APRIL-MAY
 AND THE ROAD 1981 JUNE-JULY
 CYRANO DE BERGERAC 1981 AUG-SEP
 THE TWELVES OF WINDSOR 1981 OCT-NOV
 THE PRELUDE WOMAN 1981 DEC



Theatre Australia

SEPTEMBER, 1985 - VOLUME 5, NO. 2

DEPARTMENTS

2/COMMENT

4/INFO

9/WHISPERS RUMORS AND FACTS/*Norman Kenah*

45/GUIDE/*Theater Opera Dance*

46/THESPIA'S CROSSWORD

SPOTLIGHT

11/THEY'RE PLAYING OUR SONG: WATERS AND WEAVER/*Lucy Wagner*

13/QTC — 10TH ANNIVERSARY/*Douglas Hedge*

14/PETER NICHOLLS/*Larry Garbutt*

FEATURES

15/CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC/*Dorothy Hewett*

18/DRAMA AND THE MEDIA/*Michelle Field*

INTERNATIONAL

20/France/AVIGNON FESTIVAL/*Irving Wardle*

21/USA/THE SEASON PAST/*Karl Loefer*

22/TH/FUTURE WORLD HAPPENINGS

FILM

23/THE EARTHLING/*Elizabeth Riddell*

DANCE

25/DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM/*William Shakespeare*

27/AUSTRALIAN BALLET TOUR/*Sue Davidson*

OPERA

28/KATYA, RIGOLETTO AND PILGRIM'S PROGRESS/*David Gyer*

REVIEWS

30/ACT/TRAITORS, MESH/*Marguerite Webb*

31/NSW/CYRANO DE BERGERAC/*Robert Page*

BACKYARD, SCANLAN/*Barry O'Connor*

THE DYBBUK/*Tony Barclay*

THE CONMAN/*Barry O'Connor*

34/QLD/LET'S TWIST AGAIN/*Fernanda Kelly*

TRAVELLING NORTH/*Sylvie de Courte Roger*

THE TEMPEST/*Elizabeth Perkins*

36/SA/ON THE WALLABY, DONE FOR THE MONEY/*Michael Marley*

THE MOTHER, CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE/*Barry Pines*

38/VIC/A DOLLS HOUSE, A BOY FOR ME/*Colin Duckworth*

THE KEN WRIGHT SHOW, DEATH OF MINNIE, POTIPHAR'S WIFE/*Suzanne Spanner*

42/WA/LOOT/*Cliff Gifford*

IT WAS THE LARK/*Margot Lake*

BOOKS

44/OLD AND NEW/*John McCallum*

34/STATISTICS AND MARKETING/*Paul Rex*

COMMENT

THEATRE AS BIG BUSINESS

That the theatre and entertainment industry is a major form of business activity was never doubted by the Elizabethans, more particularly by the Victorians with their huge audiences and certainly by commercial theatre entrepreneurs of today. The largest ventures, worth millions of dollars to their investors, are produced, packaged and sold with the same strategies as any product to be bought in the supermarket. So we have *Shine* being sold on the same basis as films like *Stars* are, where one of the major inducements is the producer's record-breaking expenditure. Michael Eddley and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust were not sure that the Dame Theatre of Harlem would be the sell-out success it was until the brilliantly conceived television commercial first bookings starting only a few days before opening.

With the advent of Little Theatre and the morale of subsidy, however, theatre accepted an amateur and process art, with its acolytes working for little or nothing, shows being mounted to cater to the requirements of an rather than the portraiture and social concentration on publishing itself, except to an elite. But since have moved on, in Britain the movement engendered by one woman — Lillian Baylis, herself an agent in knowledge of the performing arts — has resulted in real national opera, ballet and theatre companies occupying huge complexes that are at least as important tourist attractions as any West End theatre.

Hence, the major subsidised state companies, and notably the MTC, have grown from tiny repertory theatres to major financial organisations. To quote just a handful of statistics: in 1978 the MTC had a turnover of above \$3 million. Ninemths on the same year was well over \$2½ million, even one of the oldest companies, the Mole in the Wall, saw \$300,000 pass through its hands and there have been considerable expansions of all round in the last two years.

Another indication of the rising business status of theatre is the increasing private sponsorship it is attracting. In spite of euphemistic terms like "patronage" and "sponsorship", commercial houses, quite properly, have sophisticated methods of assessing the value to them of such donations, in terms of advertising and public awareness. Just as major sporting events provide high profile and good environment advertising, so theatre is starting to make money into this area. It is

not simply the Australian Opera who can attract money from Utah, but the State Theatre Company of SA from Dunhill, Navered from Rothmans, the Sydney Festival, Sydney Dance Company and even luncheon theatre in Sydney from AGL.

Even the Taxation Department is looking at theatre in terms of income, with sales tax a major issue at present. Sales tax is levied on the conversion of raw materials into salable products. Certain large companies like the Australian Ballet and Opera have been paying tax over the years on the transformation of wood, paint and fabric into sets and costumes, and the Department has recently demanded similar payments from theatre companies, to be retrospective from their inception. Naturally such an unbudgeted expense over some ten years, for most, would be enormous, and Ninemths is to fight the tax case the result of which will set the precedent for all companies.

The Government, a state, is also looking at recouping investment in entertainment in a more straight-forward way, with the possible institution of a showbusiness tax. The idea conceived by Chris Beards (of *Laugh In* fame) and thought favourably of by Tony Staley, is for a joint venture between the Federal Government and private enterprise to fund the development and promotion of magicians, actors, singers, writers, dancers and others — in return for participation in their future equity.

Theatre is moving on apace as part of the educational market and the commercial possibilities of video-taping productions for sales to schools are being investigated. No chance of videoing a Williamson play, though, in spite of the demand, because of the very high likelihood of the piece being bought for film or television production.

And from various sources the money is being found to finance international tours of increasing numbers of Australian companies. Three of these — the Australian Dance Theatre, Circus Oz and the Ensemble, representing three different capitals — are appearing this month at the Edinburgh Festival.

Clear are the days of Little Theatre, theatre is now big business.



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I N F O

A SHAKESPEARE COMPANY...The latest project to get underway, funded under the Limited Life Scheme by the Theatre Board, is Rex Crang's group, now calling themselves A Shakespeare Company. It consists of some of the most eminent practitioners in the country, Ruth Cracknell, Rex Hurvell, Arthur Dignam, Derek Forsyth, John Gaden, on release from the Sydney Theatre Company, Ron Maddrell, Jennifer Hagan, John Howard, Robert Mearns, Kerry Walker and Jim Watts.

The company's aim is to study in detail and perform a text or texts of Shakespeare's. The project is being pursued away from the time and money pressures of the five-yearly seasonal period which has become the tradition of Australian professional theatres. They are attempting to come to a detailed understanding of a text in the light of the vast body of Shakespearean research and criticism available and, secondly, to translate their understanding into a simple and direct performance of the text. They are particularly conscious of a need to work in reaction to the prevailing tradition of naturalism in performance.



Rev. C. Cunningham

Everyone in the project is working on a full-time basis, and the work is being carried out at the old Darlinghurst School behind the Seymour Centre, and at theatres in the Seymour.

In their general survey the Company are looking those

which to a consideration of the early plays, the comedies and the late plays, leaving the histories and major tragedies to one side. Work has already begun on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and if time permits they intend to continue with a middle period "problem

comedy" and one of the late plays.

In November a season of performances at an advanced stage in the work will be given at the Theatre Theatre at the Seymour Centre.

LETTER FROM MELBOURNE...I was impressed with Graeme Blundell's dry elegant yet painstakingly analytical article in the July issue of *7-8*. The loss of major theatre artists like himself is a blow from which Melbourne intellectual life may never recover.

Melbourne's few remaining actors, directors and writers of note or promise will now have to look to Sydney for creative examples and decade-defining ideas.

For many here this will come as a relief. Melbourne is exhausted. For an epoch it has had to carry the burden and the problems as Australia's premier city of ideas.

Melbourne theatre can now relax, enjoy itself, get on with

the more activity shown a few parties, read Kim Phayle, burn its copies of *Black Tides* and *Theatre Quarterly* (disposed of along Grafton St and beyond).

Blundell has put his long straight finger on one of the most exhilarating developments in Australian cultural history: an intellectual and artistic migration phenomenon and thinkers actually uprooting themselves and their families, travelling North out of a lust for creative fulfillment.

I see this as the harbinger of a new national maturity. People usually migrate in search of better conditions, a kinder climate, more food, more money, employment, a better price, even freedom. This



migration, however, announces a new and selfless ideology: a spacious faith in our theatrical future.

It will take time for Melbourne to adjust to the role of province and colony to the fresh perspective of Sydney and the Bush.

If things here are as rank as Blundell's article suggests, then such a relocation could take on one of two curious ironic paradoxes out of a sense of inferiority to Sydney: something quite novel for Melbourne, secondly, a thorough and searching and possible renewal in the light of Sydney's renaissance.

It is to Blundell's credit that he has made the latter, more healing, course a distinct likelihood, so here are his thoughts from personal despair, bias, rhetoric, self-pity and disruptive, get-pitched, quite properly he has returned from even hating that he might be the one to salvage the Melbourne wreck. Melbourne's loss is Australian theatre's gain. Jack Hildred

FILM AND TV PRODUCTION... The Australian Film and Television Schools are now advertising for applicants to their highly intensive, four-week course in film and TV production. They can only take twenty-five participants and the course is scheduled to start on February 2 1980, the closing date for applications is November 4.

The course includes all aspects of production, from actually using a 16mm camera, to cutting in the camera, lighting, film stocks, all in theory and practice. Then there's documentary direction, scriptwriting and commentary.

The next part of the course is concerned with actual filming exercises and seeing the work from all points of view, from

script-writer-director to boom operator. From there you go on to editing in principle and doing your *leaves* exercise. The film aspect is rounded off with production design and management and finally the all important marketing.

The television side starts with studio familiarity and down straight into exercises including directing light entertainment

and chronology work. Drama direction, script evaluation, visualization and casting are all major parts of the course. There are also workshops, chronography sessions and discussions.

Entry to this extremely comprehensive course is by written application to AFISV and then by a selection committee.



Julie Brown

PLAYWRIGHTS-IN-RESIDENCE... The Literature Board of the Australia Council is now calling for joint applications from playwrights

and theatre companies for assistance under the 1980 playwright-residence scheme funded by the Literature and Theatre Boards.

A playwright-in-residence is a playwright who is attached to a particular theatrical group for a specified period so that he/she can work on his/her

scripted in company with a director and actors.

Two different types of playwright-in-residence grants are offered, one for professional theatre companies for the employment and training of promising new or young playwrights and the other for TLE or community groups for established playwrights to work on the production of new programs and wider community involvement in theatre.

In the past year the Board's contribution to the salaries of theatre playwrights - in - residence, grants usually being determined on a 3:1 basis and ranging from \$700 to \$3,000 for periods of one to six months.

Guidelines and application forms are available from the Literature Board, PO Box 302, North Sydney. 2060. Applications on the appropriate forms must be received by the Board by the closing date of 30 September 1980.

MURKIN TO BE YET

The State Theatre Company of South Australia's current production *The Man From Mukimoon* Dorothy Hewson's latest musical, is to be revised and taken to London in March next year.

An invitation to bring the production over was extended to Kevin Palmer (the show's director) by the new director of the Old Vic, Timothy West who had won the company's work during two years of Australia he has made with the then Prospect Company. The Man From Mukimoon, Hilary Mander for the Arts, said, "This overseas tour to the former home of the National Theatre of Great Britain reflects the growing overseas recognition of Australian talent in general and the standard of the S.T.C.

ensemble in particular. This revision is especially significant following closely on the Australian Dance Theatre's trip to the 1980 Edinburgh Festival."

At this stage it is thought that the entire project will come to London. Marie D'Arcy, Daphne Grey, Robert Grubb, Edwin Hodgman, Audina Illich, Deborah Lisle, Carmel McIlhenny and Tony Stratton. The music for *Mukimoon* is by Jim Coster with lighting by Nigel Loxton and sets and costumes by Sue Russell.

Let's hope the production doesn't share the same fate as *The Club* at the Old Vic, the status of which as a venue has declined somewhat since the departure of the National for their new complex.



Dorothy Hewson

I N F O

CONTINUING SAGA OF CIRCUS OZ... Following a ten week season at Sydney's Park Theatre, Circus Oz headed off to Papua New Guinea to perform with about 1,400 participants from all over the South Pacific in the third South Pacific Festival of Arts, of which Ken Hester was one of the adjudicators.

The Festival continued in Port Moresby, but also reaching Lae and Wauak, opened on July 1 and ran for two weeks. During that period Circus Oz presented nine performances, all outdoors, to enthusiastic audiences of up to 8,000 people, mostly nationals who had never seen a circus before. They showed through their overwhelming response particularly to clowning and aerial work, that the largely visual forms used in circus transcended cultural barriers with consummate ease. Their reception was aided by the absence of television in PNG; audiences turned up four hours in advance to be sure of getting a good view.

The Australian contingent also consisted of Aboriginal dance groups from the Bangkai



Circus Oz performing in Papua New Guinea

and Lake Eyre regions of Arnhem Land, the Torres Strait Islanders and Mornington Island, all of whom were extremely well received, and whom Circus Oz found a great pleasure to meet and perform with. The tour was arranged basically by the Aboriginal

Artists Agency.

Stephen Champion of Oz feels that "perhaps the most treasured aspect of this adventure for Circus Oz is our heightened awareness as Australians of the immense cultural wealth and diversity within the South Pacific region. Some-

thing we are glad to have left a part of before we embark on our European tour" which opened in Rotterdam on August 8 and will then take them through Holland, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and England before returning to Australia in mid-91.

SONGS FROM SIDESHOW ALLEY. There are great things brewing for Robyn Archer following her triumphant tour of 4 Year 4 Time Helen Merrigan wrote it for London and Alan (Cass) Soap The Music Company think it will be a smash hit in the USA. 1991 looks like the year when Robyn's international stardom will be born.

Merrigan is who is reworking Songs From Sideshow Alley which she wrote, composed the music for and appeared in along with Robyn Nixon, for this year's Adelaide Festival. Now it is to be revived in a new production by Alan Delfield at the Park in Sydney. Robyn, Fisher is in direct, not the two Robyns, but Vanessa Harvey and Maggie Kirkpatrick in the roles of the two sideshow hands. Opening night is set for October 16.



Gemma Hart

HARLEM MONTIONS... There have been so many enquiries about the superb photographs done for the Dance Theatre of Harlem that the man who shot it all deserves special mention.

The Harlem photos were taken by Paul Crowley of Sydney.



WORTH THE WAIT



The Australian dance arena is wide and varied and though there may be some reference to dance in some magazines the art itself deserves its own periodical.

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September**

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



by Norman Kessel

What an encouraging box-office bonanza the *Dancer Theatre of Harlem* became for the Australian *Elizabethan Theatre Trust*. Its three-week season in Sydney netted a record take of \$420,000 and a non-performance visit to Brisbane collected another \$150,000—an astounding 97 percent capacity in paid-for tickets, complementaries bringing attendance to 100 percent on every performance.

At the time of writing both Melbourne and Adelaide had passed break-even figures and were headed for similar sell-out seasons. Weekly break-even figure for Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide was \$154,000 and for Brisbane \$112,000. Total break-even figure for the six-weeks tour was \$882,000, nearly exceeded before the tour was half over.

Among the above every remark I read credited **Michael Edgley** as prime mover of the visit. An understandable mistake, of course, because the Edgley organization has promoted just about every major ballet to come here in recent years. Even the programme had Michael's picture above that of AETT general manager Jeffrey Joynton-Smith.

The fact is, however, that credit for organizing the visit belongs solely to the Trust's entrepreneurial division which began negotiations five and a half years ago. These involved five subsequent visits to New York to the division's administrators **Jeffrey Kessel**.

Offered a piece of the action, the alert **Michael Edgley International Pty Ltd** took a 25 percent involvement and **JE Williamson Productions Ltd** another 20 per cent. The Trust handled administration and management and Edgley contributed his indispensable expertise in promotion and advertising. Final flip to a vigorously successful enterprise was the presence of **Sir Robert Hippenham** as consultant on repertoire.

Will the recent **Samuel Sandhu** musical, *Samson*, find our way to Australia? The Adelaide Festival Center Trust has an option, but programming manager **Tony Perrin** has been reported as saying "It might be too bloody thirsty for

Adelaide." More than 1000 demonstrators are that it folded on Broadway with a loss of \$480,000 and that *Samson* formed its London box-office potential as "questionable" especially at a record top ticket price of \$24 in the 2380-seat Drury Lane Theatre. A friend of mine who attended the final preview in London was mildly entertained but found the characters all too starchy and the storyline disappointingly choppy.

What's in it for playgoers these days? Talking to **Peter Nichols** on the foyer of Sydney's Theatre Royal on the opening night of his *Born to the Gardens* I asked if this was his first visit to Australia. "Oh, yes," he said. "I couldn't possibly afford to come. I'm only here now because the company paid for me. I did, however, pay for my wife."

Here's a thought for local restaurateurs. The famous *Simpsons in the Strand* restaurant is offering a 10 percent discount on dinner served between 6pm and 7.15pm provided the customer holds tickets for an evening performance at any London theatre. Same concession applies to mainstay ticket holders for Saturday lunch.

Future says London light press agent **Paul Barnard** is moving to Australia but will retain a contact office there at *Hilton Advertising*.

After a break of five years since the *Q Theatre* moved to Perth's landmark theatre is back at the AMP Theatre at Sydney's Circular Quay with some interesting headlines. That *Australian Gas Light Company* is a co-sponsor of its long and valuable support of the Festival of Sydney, the Sydney City Council with a cash donation of \$1,000 the *Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust* with its entrepreneurial expertise. Production by the *Australian Repertory Company*, but Gas Company backing has been acknowledged by naming the venue *The Living Flame Lighthouse Theatre*.

I had already seen some months earlier a preview of the opening production, **Paul Alderman's** *Black's Apple* (which the *Q Theatre* itself had staged some years ago). This version is neatly designed for presentation in structured areas as part of an interesting concept by actress **Valerie Newstead** called *Theatre in The House*. It is well-directed by **Michael Morton-Evans** and engagingly played by **Christine Cameron** and **Michael Brunsell**, both parents in *Love Love at the Music Hall* which also lately closes on September 6, together with **Peter Sims**, currently in *Coram's* at the *Opera House* and **Neville Howarth**, recently seen in the TV series *Portrait*.

Morton-Evans is artistic director of the company which is controlled by its three directors, **David Major Nelson Myers**, **July Susan McMahon** and **Professor Eric**

Davies, with day-to-day running handled by a management committee of three actors, **Ron Raddiffe**, **Valerie Newstead** and **Felicit Gordon**.

McMahon, the Stage-Art Company, founded by actors **Oliver Bodd** and **Anthony Whelan** to present landmark shows at *Artspace House Theatre*, has one truly troubled water—struggling to do with availability of dates which may or may not bring them. The company's latest defiance of a production of *Amadeus's* 4 *Phenix* has *Programme*, which was to have played from July 7 to August 1.

What a variety the past year has provided for variety agent **Barry Corbett**. A public choice performance in the *Newstead's* *the Lyrician Theatre* at the *Opera House* was followed by an eventual four months in London with **David Williamson's** *The Club*. Back home to test with discount rules at *June Street*—the Greek club proprietor is **John Fozzard's *The Book of George* Place (with a credit card TV commercial as a bonus?) and the Jewish father of the postcard bride in *Solomon Asch's* *The Dybbuk*. Next, on September 3, he joins the "Farmer" for a *Summer cruise* on which he will appear in a trio of revues under the title *Adventure Australia* when other members of the company are **David Glickin**, mostly back from overseas and left with him at the *Music Hall*, **John Nixon** and **Kay Powell**. They return November 20.**

Obvious Comparisons Elope. We heard a woman behind us at the opening night of *Le Roi de l'Amour* tell a companion: "I saw a French play a few years ago and it was better than this. It was *de la degeneration* (which by *Molotov*)."

Sidney director **Ted Craig**, now operating internationally, has had a two-year "saga" driving *And The Jacks* at the Adelaide Festival Center in January before driving *And Back* for longer for New York's *Roundabout Theatre* and a revival of *And The Jacks* for a UK tour which opened in Coventry, commencing between the two seasons for the premiere. He will be back in Australia to direct a Melbourne Theatre Company production of *The Playhouse* this week opening on October 6.

If you're both wondering whatever happened to actress **Hilma Lee**, she's having reading Lane cards at clubs and private parties, but that doesn't mean she won't be back on stage as soon as the right role is offered.

If you have any Shakespeare first looks hung around, they're now worth big money. One sold recently in London for \$187,000 and another in Paris for more than \$200,000.

And talking of prices, **John Lennon** and **Yoko Ono** recently sold one of their pedigree Hofmann-Fremann coats at the *Seacrest* State Fair for \$265,000 believed to be a world record.



DARWIN THEATRE GROUP



The Darwin Theatre Group seeks the following staff for the 1987 year. D.T.G. is an amateur group moving towards the establishment of a semi-professional theatre company.

DIRECTOR

All director sought up to 14th October each month February to 1st May 1987 for \$11,000 to \$13,000 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience. The Director would be expected to prepare a programme of plays as decided by the Committee including one or more touring shows. The Director would also coordinate all activities on the group's behalf for continued growth and financial building.

ACTOR

One D.T.G. actor available to represent group each week from 1st February to 1st May 1987 for \$1,000 to \$1,500 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience.

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SPOTLIGHT



They're Playing Our Song—Jacki Weaver and John Waters

by Lucy Wagner

Jacki Weaver and John Waters, perhaps the two best known performers in the country, are a tiny person famous for her big personality, he with a huge female following for his enigmatic sex appeal. The casting for the two-person musical, *They're Playing Our Song*, seems an obvious one, and yet they've only worked together twice before. First in a revue called *God Save The Queen* and more recently in the final episode of *Rush*, the award-winning episode as Waters points out.

"Everyone won an award except me," raves Jacki. They went to the Lodge ceremony to collect Hugh Keays Byrnes's trophy, "and John lost it."

"Yes, but Hugh didn't mind, he just said his mother collects them. He was very sporting about it" claims the

culprit, but adds, "He'll probably send someone else next time."

They both appear genuinely enthusiastic about the show, not just another musical (although they don't denigrate the form in any way), but principally a major Neil Simon play with all the qualities you expect of one. The script is tightly written and very funny, and as the plot concerns a composer and lyricist the songs are fully integrated.

John Waters: "It's not exaggerating—it's a great winner of theatrical dialogue, it times itself perfectly. It's not a bunch of one-liner gags. There are no major dressings about how to do it, it's done, it's like Shaw, you don't need to change a comma. The difficulty is just doing it."

Supposedly based on the relationship between Marvin Hamlisch and Carol Bayer Sager (who wrote the

music and lyrics respectively) the characters are opposites, she music retiring except in her compositions, and the guy "extremely bright, speaks with candour and honesty, has enormous enthusiasm and she's a lot to deal with," to quote Simon himself.

Were they type-cast?

"I think it's all true except extremely bright," says Jacki modestly.

"No. I've watched musicians all my working life," John reflects "and they really are a breed apart, not like actors at all. They do tend to be very private people who don't express themselves much other than in their music. The theatricality of this lies in the interplay, she won't stop until she's brought him out."

Other highly theatrical elements are of course the razor-sharp Simon dialogue, and the alter-ego device. Three guys and three boys make up a

"Sometimes I think a lot of what we get paid is for the inconvenience of being known."

chores, enriching the show visually and musically and, ironically dressed, representing other facets of Vernon and Sonia. Playing along with the cast in a twenty-three page orchestra under the direction of Dale Ringland. But the major onus is firmly on the two leads, singing, dancing and with all the dialogue, scarcely off the stage for a minute. "I'm just glad it's John, he's so easy to work with," says Weaver.

Productions-wise the Australian Song is identical to the American productions, but Jackie Weaver saw the New York show and finds their performances very different. And word director Philip Cusack, who has directed all productions, is that the Australians may be the outstanding cast.

Talk of such acclamation, though, always swings the comparison around to its inverse, the cringe, the lack of a star system, the endemic Australian inferiority complex. Jackie Weaver opines that often people haven't seen overseas work and merely assume that we can't be as good, while in fact we are equally good, equally bad and sometimes equally as indifferent as English or American theatre.

I quoted them a statistic that appeared in last month's issue, that the Theatre Royal was budgeting on 40% houses as break-even for *Song*, whereas it had been 80% for Deborah Kerr in *The Day After the Fair* because overseas names are better box.

"Take *Fleissner*", said John, "everyone said it won't do well because *Myge* and *Shaker* in the Seymour Centre, although you might get some spill-over. What happened? *Fleissner* was wall to wall and *Myge* and *Shaker* were papering their Saturday night houses, so don't tell me Australian actors aren't box office."

Today the mainstream recognition is through television (Dustin Hoffman found out what recognition meant when he walked down the street with a Charlie's Angel, someone quips) as is the case with Weaver and Waters, and



perhaps live theatre would be in a better position if Australian television wanted making more of the country's acting talent. But this pair concede that the public side of stardom is not something they particularly enjoy.

"Sometimes," muses Jackie Weaver "I think that a lot of what we get paid is for the inconvenience of being well known. Even acting for subsidised companies, where mostly we are all paid the same, the stress of publicising a show falls a lot on us so it should... but it's a lot of extra work."

The lack of performer hierarchy and levels of bankability does mean that the better known can't afford to stick to one medium... let alone get type-cast. Both say that working alternatively in film and live theatre are ideal for the actor's craft. Returning to the stage after eighteen months and *Breathless* for Waters, and even longer, *Bedrooms Full*, for Weaver, is no problem. "It's like riding a bicycle you don't forget how" (Waters), "It's marvellous to hear that laughter again" (Weaver), "Yes, you say a line and fifteen hundred people laugh... that's adrenalin power" (Waters).

Interestingly both of them had to audition for the roles of Vernon and Sonia... twice, and along with several

others.

Jackie Weaver has turned down offers of better money for television work to act in theatre, although the low pay in some subsidised companies (notably one now defunct) drew some headline anecdotes. Perhaps "star" status is a limiting one though, for both would be interested in working for Nimrod or Sydney Theatre Company, but have received no offers of late.

Jackie "There are some young directors now that I wonder if I'll ever work with. Because there's no real star system no one can afford to get concerned and you put not being asked down to not being wanted. If people think I wouldn't be interested then there's a terrible communication problem. One of the plays I loved doing most was *Red Tide*... and that wasn't even a success. Of course you accept lower pay, money isn't everything."

John "Subsidised theatres, though, should be fighting for audiences the same as commercial theatres, and if you can pack a show for them they should be able to pay the same rates. But then I think they should pay everyone more."

As with most actors, John Waters and Jackie Weaver are pleased if their names, made in film and TV, draw more people to live theatre. She is constantly surprised by people, at Nimrod, even in their thirties and forties, coming up after a show to say they enjoyed their first experience of live theatre. Both feel that commercial theatre here should promote our own actors, for its own sake in the long term. Today *Shards*, tomorrow *Love Love*.

Today... and for at least eight months in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne... *They're Playing Our Song*, tomorrow...² For Jackie Weaver another television series of *The Marriage Game*. For John Waters, he looks forward to the lead in a great Australian... urban, contemporary film... if he gets the offer.

QTC—10th Anniversary

by Douglas Hedgie

The QTC is celebrating its 10th Anniversary with what it calls a "high profile". Heading or directing casts recruited from both local and interstate artists are such names as Joan Bruce, Ross Graham, Margo Lee, Robin Lovejoy, Mick Rodger and Jane Saiter. It's already reached up a smash-hit with *Gypsy* (using the Queensland Theatre Orchestra, which didn't exist a decade ago) and a sell-out season of *Thoroughbred North* has just concluded.

Early in its history—in fact after its second production—Katharine Brisbane referred to the Company as a "small miracle" but predicted that though its work at the time was "equal to the best Australia can produce", it would not be accepted overnight.

She was right.

The production that inspired Ms Brisbane's remarks was *Arlecchino: After I Come* by Alan Edwards, who directed it, had described it as a "middle-of-the-road" play. Shortly after it opened a letter was published in the press over the signature "Thomas Lovell, Gresham", deploring what the writer alleged was continual blasphemy throughout the play. This led to audience walk-outs, the cancellation of hundreds of bookings and a heated debate in the press and the pulpit.

Acceptance in other areas was hard-won, too. The Shakespearean account was opened in 1972 with a production of *Ten Thousand Nights* that was described by one critic as "a Kamikaze dive into culture". Audiences stayed away in droves. Three years later *The Tempest* of the Shires, starring Dame Celine and Robin Ramsey, drew such a clamorous response that its season was extended and even then the demand for tickets could not be met. The 1978 version of *Long Lear* starring Warren Mitchell was so successful both commercially and critically, that it toured to Sydney's Seymour Centre, where it filled every bit as well

The Company's first attempt at Australian drama (as distinct from a musical) was in 1973 with *Barbie's Company*. While nobody would argue that the play is sure-fire box office, the production was a major achievement for so young a company.

The early years spawned some now-famous alumni. The opening production, *4. From Don*, featured a young actress in the role of Sade, the mad. Her name was Geraldine Turner. The first schools' company grew Carol Bruce one of her first jobs. Ivar Kain and Frank Gallacher are two prominent names from the early days and later, Geoffrey Rush was to start his career at QTC.

One of QTC's major objectives over the decade has been to stress the "Queensland" part of its title by serving not just the capital city but the entire state. To this end regular adult tours are made through country centres and theatre-in-education teams are almost permanently on the road. In a state the size of Queensland this presents enormous logistical and artistic challenges—the difference in climate, lifestyle and taste between say, Cairns and Cairnsville is often as wide as the distance that separates them.

The 112 commitment occupies a large portion of the Company's funding, and there are often as many as three teams on the road at once, at least two of them of more than six months' duration. Sometimes they average three performances a day in conditions which are, to say the least, unsophisticated. Special tours have been mounted to cater for the specific needs of children in the remote areas of Arnhem Land and Central Australia. But since this line of work is, by its very nature, conducted outside the mainstream, even QTC's regular audiences are not fully aware of it.

But the Company feels that it has paid off.

"Through its work in this area we've helped to change the sensibility of the people of Queensland," Alan Edwards

said. "We've helped to give a new dignity to the idea of the performing arts—not just in Brisbane, but all over the state, with particular attention to schoolchildren. We now number among our regular audience young adults whose first experience of theatre ever was through our schools' performances."

As the company enters its second decade its priorities and policies are being reviewed. It recognises the need to maintain its responsibility to the development of local talent while at the same time strengthening its resources by attracting talent from the national pool. A new approach to country touring is being discussed, wherein it is hoped a better means may be found of serving the individual



Alan Edwards, QTC artistic director

needs of regional communities than the present series of one-night stands. The statewide identity is still important.

"There's a train of thought that believes Queensland has little cultural life of any consequence," Edwards says. "It's as widespread as it is erroneous, and we believe we have done much to dispel it. We rate this as one of our proudest achievements."

Douglas Hedgie has worked on an article with the QTC for some of its ten years, and has compiled and written a history of the company, *The Company Of QTC*, which will be published this month.

A few moments in the life of Peter Nicholls

by Larry Galbraith

British playwright Peter Nicholls likes to keep busy. He is currently working on two projects, a musical and a pantomime for adults based on an historical theme. He has recently completed a new work *Parson Plot* which he hopes the Royal Shakespeare Company will present next autumn.

"I don't like to leave plays lying around for too long, unperformed," he told me, "the trouble is a lot of people get to read them and it's only for someone to lift an idea and turn it into a quickie television play".

He had interrupted his negotiations with the BBC to make a rush trip to Australia for the Sydney opening of his play *Born In The Garden*. He himself had directed as first production, in Bristol, with Beryl Reid leading the cast. That production had since transferred to the West End.

"We were chatting in his hotel room a few hours before its first performance. His main concern was whether its "Englishness" would strike a responsive chord with Australian audiences or whether it would suffer a similar fate to the London production of David Williamson's *Traveling North*. While he admires Williamson's work very much (he and his wife have entertained Williamson in London) he felt that that play didn't travel well. *Born In The Garden* expresses many of his concerns about England, but he was doubtful that they would be shared by us.

He is less concerned with the production of his play, the main worry being the fact that Australian actors tend to play rather loosely with the lines.

"You take a great deal of trouble over writing them, making sure they sound right, that they have the rhythm you want them to have, so consequently you don't like to have them changed, so have them nailed up".

No names were mentioned, of



Peter Nicholls. Photo: Peter Johns

course. He suggested that in England, even the most mediocre actors will respect and play a playwright's lines.

I asked him about his new play. "It'll play a good deal more theatrically than *Born In The Garden*, but it is again a family story, again a play about middle aged marriage, but more dramatic, more serious, less funny perhaps than the others".

Peter Nicholls acknowledges that the family is his subject.

"Even those plays which don't seem to be about the family, primarily, such as *The Necessary Health* which was actually about a number of strangers thrown together in a hospital ward, it was still about the family in the sense that people reconstruct the family, inevitably. Once they got there, one man took on the role of mother, another the role of a father, another that of a son and so on. So you were reconstructing the family as if it were an invariable unit of society. Even if it didn't exist as an institution, people would still voluntarily reconstruct it.

"My plays are all about the horrors

of the family, the compensations, the lures of the family, the comforts, the difficulties of escaping that."

He tends to write from the point of view of an observer, rather than someone who simply wants to express ideas. He also likes to play around with dramatic structure to experiment.

"I don't see the point of writing for the theatre without using the experience of seeing there with a lot of people watching a play."

Very often he feels that other people's plays that he could easily see them on television. He wants his own to have a definite theatrical quality, a quality that would ensure they would only work well in the theatre. Consequently he wrote his first stage play comparatively late in life. This of course was *A Day In The Death Of Joe Egg* which utilised quite a dazzling array of theatrical devices, principally based on acknowledging the presence of the audience in the theatre.

"I think this situation of the writer, which is the audience, the witness of the event is something that has to be acknowledged."

CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC

By Dorothy Hewett



Dorothy Hewett's latest play *Man From Mankinapin* is to go to the Old Vic. Here, with Bob Elton's remark that sixty per cent of successful productions here have music, in mind, she writes about music dramas.

In Adelaide recently, while attending the rehearsals of my play with music, *The Man From Mankinapin* I went to one of the last nights of Nick Engh's sold out season of *On the Water*.

It was a delightful and enlightening experience, and once again proved beyond doubt something I have believed in and mused over and tried to practise, for years now: the Australian public loves burlesque, vaudeville, song and dance and sentiment,

but here was the preference being given to the gross, more upwards melodrama, farce, burlesque, pantie, operetta, vaudeville, the arching shades of Gilbert and Sullivan, musical comedy with a dash of the old set dress as my newspaper colleague. And there we were even the more hardened of us crying over Australia's queen of song and dance the incomparable Norma Hayes standing centre stage singing "Dear Johnny I have nothing to write about", an unashamed tearjerker if ever I heard one.

In the wings loomed the ghosts of Williamson Fuller, the Tin Edgley and Lowe, Serle's Tent show the Goldfields' melodramas, even Dick

Lawrence's *North American* on these premises.

Recently there has been much talk of reviving the musical theatre in Australia. Last year I went to a highly meeting where entrepreneurs, actors, writers, dancers, et al discussed the feasibility of revivals of the popular musical comedies of the past. Needless to say nobody thought of an Australian musical. It was left to a young American to point out that the American musical gained its credence and following because it came out of the American experience. Where were the Australian musicals? he asked us.

Now I have nothing against *Olivera*, *Whose But A's*, *Fun Loos*, *Hells Dads*, *South Pacific*, *Camelot*.



the romantic as passions of the hero or heroine, and create a stage world that moves easily in and out of the real and the fantastic without putting too drastic a strain on the imagination of the audience.

The play with music is different in kind to the musical, as Brecht discovered for it enables both playwright and audience to keep one foot on the ground of realism and the other high kicking to the stars.

It has the force of a lively and deep running tradition behind it, it is "recognisable", and it was not an accident that one of the most influential of the new Australian dramas was *The Legend of King O'Malley*. Boddy and Ellis' serious-comic romp through recent history with a picaresque lurches here, life as poem, and the Federal Parliament as pure vaudeville.

The O'Malley team founded the Sydney Nimrod, with burlesque writers like Blair Grahame Bond and Boddy in *Blacks as We* (Garrigue as a puno transvestite, Hamlet as Kate Breckinridge, with that never to be forgotten cleavage and Horatio as camp), and *Flash Jim Flash*, a billed

musical about a trans-posed hero in

In Melbourne there were the documentary agit-prop type entertainments like *The Colours Melbourne* at the Prism and it was here and at La Mama that Jack Hibberd laid the foundations for his rough vaudeville theatre, songs, comic turns, prat falls and a stonemason's theme that goes straight back to Mo and the Tin.

In *The Man from Abingdon* I was searching for Australian mythic images that went back to the music theatre of my childhood, and fused with the characters, sounds, images and landscape of the real country towns I lived in and visited and heard about as a child. I used the musical comedy stencils, the principal boy and the principal girl. The make-believe course that they both go off to play leads in JC Williamson. From the same source come the happy ending, the parting principle even Jack must get his Jill, the duets, the "crowd scenes, the solos, the patriotic and group songs. It is a foreign world that has no vicious villains. The hero and heroine (doubled) are flawed by human failings, the madman contemplates murder but does not carry it out. Polly is not "raped" by the Hebbly but just "given a bit of a fright" only the murdered Abingones in the creakbed cannot be washed offstage, and the only happiness that the suburban Harry Twissley and the part aborigine Touch of the Tar can find is to take to the wilderness across the saltflats even there "happiness is mighty hard to find".

The music written by Jim Comer is an admixture of the romantic, music hall folk, patriotic, choronic, traditional popular and Elizabethan, with a Noel Coward type duet thrown in for good measure. There is also a sound track, known as "the world night music" which uses every electronic device to create the atmosphere of the little town at night as night falls and the spirit of Marley takes over.

In a play with music the music becomes an integral part of the structure of the play: the sound track and the songs arise naturally out of the action, the mood, the dialogue, pointing up the moment, reminding the audience of what they perhaps already know or foreshadowing a future action. Sometimes a song will be a character so that the particular song is

associated with that character throughout the play. The music is never intrusive nor are the dance routines. They are not set pieces as in the traditional musical comedy. They slide in and out of the action with as much naturalness as the writer, composer, director, musicians, actor, choreographer and lighting crew use dance. What they do help create the imaginative world, the atmosphere by which the audience is drawn into the play, attends to it, is hopefully captivated by it, goes out into the forest perhaps haunting a couple of the catkins trees, but comes home with them a heightened and magical understanding of the world they have grown up into.

The play with music, unlike the musical, can deal with the most complex human states, with comedy, tragedy, black comedy, play ducks and ducks with time, have the most complicated plot structure, explore human relationships, use the devices of symbolism, expressionism, naturalism, ritual, surrealism as a kind of marvellous admixture woven with songs. A fragmented montage, sometimes stylised and orchestrated speech, do not seem awkward placed side by side with the most realistic one-to-one dialogue. The audience, seduced by the music of speech and song entwined in the play, the play of natural sound and dance movements will follow the playwright into a world of the imagination that recognises no boundaries. At least that is the theory, and the experience seems to bear out that the normally pragmatic Australian who likes his film and theatre as close to the real as possible (whatever that is) will take any amount of punn, burlesque, farce, melodrama, vaudeville and poetry wrapped in the towel of music and dance.

Perhaps then this is the way out for those of us who exclaim, "The other theatre" - a way that is followed in Australian tradition so that the audience read the signposts and follow, past the ghosts of Mrs George Wallace, Nellie Maiba singing "Home Sweet Home", Nellie Stewart, Our Glad the Marcus gets the tent show, the "Jellies" and the whole glorious band into the poem, the style, the play, the music, and the overall vision that can illuminate our lives in the theatre.

THEATRE IN THE MEDIA

MICHEL FELD LOOKS AT FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR

Retrospectively 1980 is going to look like a turning-point in Australian radio and television drama. It was the year ABC-FM drama productions flourished in Adelaide. It was the year when the ABC-TV Drama Department discovered the country's theatre playwrights and produced six stage plays to a standard that the state theatre companies had set. It was the year the ABC's Committee of Review considered the recommendations on media drama submitted by the Australia Council, the Writers Guild, Actors Equity and others. It is the year the ABC may launch a *Lavender*-type magazine that will discuss not only its own drama programmes but also will review live theatre performances. It is the year the Federal Government announced its plans for cable television, a development which will completely change the complexion of media drama.

Despite the rash of developments, however, radio and television drama still have their problems. Many problems arise from the deep-rooted suspicion that alienates people in the live theatre from those who work in media drama. In principle, for instance, it would seem like a good idea to dress the cast of a current stage-play into an ABC recording studio for an afternoon, to reproduce the performance for radio audiences. But both the ABC and the theatre managements find it unfeasible in practice.

There are also fiscal obstacles to the developments that should be taking place in media drama. ABC-FM is chronically short of money both to execute the plays, if it has commissioned



David Williamson (centre) and cast of *The Department*

and to keep the commissions flowing out to the writers. The ABC suggests that it is also the shortage of money that creates animosities with the wider theatre community, because it cannot afford to buy the work of freelance drama producers or to employ freelance producers in its own studios. The ABC broadcasts virtually nothing of Australian drama unless it's the work of its own staff.

But the greatest obstacle of all is the distance that separates media drama from its audience. Radio drama is the Red China of the theatre world: the audience is legion but mute, and the critics either ignore it or are ill-informed. (Harris Hill of the *Melbourne Age* is, I think the only 'China'-watcher of any substance.)

Rapid changes in the technology of television broadcasting, however, are changing all this. The viewer of a television play is obviously going to respond less passively if he has gone to

the trouble to tape the performance on his video-cassette recorder and replay it when he feels most receptive. Also, if a cable-television system involves a meter which charges the viewer for each play he watches, he is motivated to pay closer attention to get his money's worth.

Any Pay-TV system is going to drastically shift the financial balance-of-power in the theatre world. By 1985 Pay-TV in the United States will have a revenue of \$6-\$7 billion, if one divides by 16 to take account of Australia's smaller population, that is still a proposed \$400 million revenue for Pay-TV here. If even one-tenth of this money is channelled back into producing stage-plays for this discriminating television audience (a small share of what is to be spent buying the rights to show movies simultaneously with their commercial cinema distribution), it will make an enormous difference to the livelihood

of playwrights, actors and directors.

The American body which corresponds to our Australia Council (the National Endowment for the Arts) has a Media Arts Program which emphatically encourages the production of one-off plays on American networks. So far, the Australia Council has not taken a stand on this. However, in the Australia Council's submission to the Committee of Review of the ABC, it was recommended that ABC-TV broadcast more live theatre productions straight from the theatres. (The Annan Committee which made the same recommendation to the BBC in its 1977 report used a wonderful euphemism, referring to the televising of "productions created for other places.") The head of ABC-TV drama, Geoff Durack, however, believes that production values (and loss in that kind of programme) What can be done when plays are televisually revised and remounted for television is shown in the six plays of the Australian Theatre Festival, but if that is the only option then the expense stands in the way of enjoying good Australian drama as a regular TV diet.

The alternative is to buy one-off dramas from overseas — such as the series mounted for Stuart Wagstaff to compare ABC-TV buys (fifteen foreign plays a year, mainly from Britain, the United States and Canada). Using a much broader definition of "television drama" than I accept (in fact counting everything that's acted), the ABC offers about 400 hours of drama a year — 80 hours of which produces itself. Of those 80, less than 20 hours would be "plays" in the sense that the live theatre understands the word.

The figures argue the well-known point that small English-speaking countries like Australia and Ireland are especially vulnerable to imports from the two large English-speaking television-producing countries. Under that handicap, Australian television may be giving us as much serious drama as we can reasonably expect. Or, maybe not.

The Sydney audience of its Sunday afternoon radio play is roughly twice the audience which the Nimrod drama in a whole year. ABC Radio runs four "theatres". Playbreak (Radio 1 on Friday mornings), which broadcast 48 plays in the 1978-79 season, 17 by Australian writers, Classical World

Theatre (Radio 2 on Saturday nights) which broadcast 21 plays last year, 5 by Australian writers, Sunday Play (Radio 3 on Sunday afternoons) which broadcast 52 plays in 1978-79, 28 by Australians, and Audio Writers' Avenue (ABC-FM on Monday nights) which broadcast 36 plays last year, about a third by Australian writers. That is more than 150 plays on ABC Radio — roughly 50% more plays than all the theatre companies around the country produced in their major seasons in 1978 (139 radio plays to 105 stage plays).

In 1978-79, about a third of the radio plays were by Australian writers. And a third of the 105 major theatre plays in 1978 were Australian. Foundlings of the ABC Radio plays had Australian producers and actors (the rest were purchased from the BBC) but since radio drama provides such short-term contracts and remunerates talent so poorly, it cannot be compared to the live theatre as an employer of talent. Producer Andrew McLennan did wonders on a meagre \$14,000 budget for ABC-FM drama in 1980-81, even the \$60,000 budget for a year of Sunday Plays isn't grand when compared to cost of live theatre. In fact, it is less than one-fifth of the Government's annual subsidy to the Nimrod Theatre alone.

Given the smallness of the bait, it's remarkable how much talent ABC Radio drama does attract. The history

of the radio play in English (unlike the German genre, for instance) is a history of poorly adapted stage plays. This is an odd way for a genre to grow.

It is as though the novel had developed out of those awkward "innovations" of films and television series that are now so pervasive. British radio drama broke from those origins and became an innovative literary and dramatic form in its own right in the 1930s and 1960s, with writers like Samuel Beckett, Louis MacNeice, Dylan Thomas, John Mortimer and Muriel Spark. ABC Radio drama was not far behind, but came slowly; it is only recently that we set it in an accident star. Among the writers who were commissioned by ABC Radio for plays this year are Frank Macpherson, Louis Nowell, David Foster, David Allen and (the ABC's own playwright discovery) Kevin Brown. Harry Oakley's *The Great God Magdalen* was commissioned by ABC-FM drama, published by the University of Queensland Press, sold to the BBC and to "Playboy" in the United States, and is the official Australian entry in the *Radio Prize*.

As I see it, radio and television drama have no responsibilities.

perhaps these are somewhat contradictory, when budgets and talent cannot serve both masters. One responsibility is to develop a distinctive type of theatre suited to the media, and to give those writers, actors and directors who want to specialise in this kind of theatre a range of possibilities in which to move. The other responsibility, I think, is to economically convey the experience of live theatre to anyone who, for reasons of expense or distance, disability or disinterest, cannot attend a performance in a physical theatre. As far back as the 1942 BBC *Footnote*, this responsibility is expounded: "To provide... theatrical entertainment for lovers of drama cut off by circumstances from the theatre itself." And as recently as the Australia Council's submission to the Committee of Review last June, the ABC is exhorted to remember this: "The whole public should be entitled to see the very best performances in government-subsidised theatres and concert halls, even though these, relayed by the media, may not provide the same experience."



Robert Brown plays *ABC* (production of A. Brown in Melbourne).

INTERN

The season past: summing up

By Karl Lavett

As we look forward to the theatrical season about to begin it might be appropriate to take a final glance at the season past. As Dorothy Parker says:

"It's manners to make a statement
As to what you got out of it all."

So here follow some highly personal Notes and some very Random Awards that for me sum up the 1979-80 New York season.

Company Done. It's clear that the creative strength of the New York theatre lies in the theatre companies of Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway. The proliferation of these companies continues to amaze me each with an individual identity and an artistic plan of its own. Within these companies there is an Establishment such as the Public Theatre, the Manhattan Theatre Club and the Circle Repertory, but the grass-ways to a fringe that might only be called *fringe*. On any weekend in the season, there's at least a hundred to choose from. Long may their creative candidates bubble.

Favourite plays of the season

- *Mojo Appeal* — B4 C Davis
- *Lush/Leave Blown* — Kevin O'Meara
- *Children of a Lesser God* — Mark Medoff
- *Talkin' a Foot* — Langford Wilson
- *Dina, Fish, Sex and Pi* — Pam Gems
- *The Sorrow of Stephen* — Peter Parrill

Off is On. This season bubbling Off-Broadway came into its own as a source to supply the mainstems of Broadway. Principally these were *Talkin' a Foot* from the Circle Repertory, *Mojo* from the Negro Ensemble, *Smile* from the Chelsea Theatre, *Mojo Appeal* (Manhattan Theatre Club) and *Twelve* (St Peter's Church Theatre) are both ready to go Broadway for the coming season. Given the significant scene on Broadway and the much more creative production of Off-Broadway, the movement is a heartening one.

The Importance of Being Earnest Award: Le Compagnie Internationale de



Susan Sarandon and Eileen Brennan in *A Couple Where Checks Sitting Around Talking*



Ragtime (center) is Jan Dole as P.T. Barnum Photo: Martha Sweig

Creations Theatricals under the direction of Peter Brook

Look Back in Anger:

Reviews were the order of the day, particularly among musicals. We had *Four Men* (from Texas), *West Side Story*, *The Most Happy Fella* and it was not to know that the note is still as high as an elephant's eye in Oklahoma. Richard Burton borrowing some Merle's magic still charmed twenty years later as King Arthur in *Camelot*. There was also *Ward On The*

Ward, Look Back in Anger and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Even new shows tried to masquerade as offerings from yesterday. *Romantic Comedy* was an updated *The Moon Is Blue* (with just a dash of male nudity) and *Sugar Babies* an affectionate look at burlesque as it might have been. Both these shows judged the public's pulse very astutely and were unqualified hits. The best revival was Paul Giamatti's *Morning at Seven*. By placing its 1929 setting back in the museum and casting wonderful actresses as the four sisters (Nancy Marchand, Maureen O'Sullivan, Elizabeth Wilson, Teresa Wright), it's hard to believe that the original ever looked as good as this happy revival.

Favourite female performances:

- Laurie Kennedy (*Lush/Leave Blown*, *Mojo*, *Barbara*, *He and She*) demonstrating in one season a range not allowed most American actresses
- Blythe Danner (*Rehearsal*)
- Maggie Smith (*Night And Day*)
- Eileen Brennan (*A Couple Where Checks Sitting Around Talking*)
- Irene Worth (*The Lady From Shanghai*)
- Maureen Anderson (*The Lady From Shanghai* and *Smiles, Smiles In The Rain*)

Flunking Out: The season saw some leading playwrights horrible.

- Tennessee Williams — *Children For A*

ATIONAL

- Summer Motel**
 ■ Edward Albee *The Last From
 Daquang*
 ■ Howard Sackler *Goodbye Fidel*
 ■ Thomas Mabe *Sahale City Skiffle*
 They may be down but they are
 definitely not out

The Youngest, Most Promising Playwright:

■ David Henry Hwang, author of *Fish in the Face* (Theater) At the age of twenty-two he succeeded in blending modern drama with Chinese classical theatre to make an original and riveting play.

The Women Plays about women, sometimes by women, provided a different viewpoint firmly in the foreground. Two of the season's best plays were about women: Pam Gori's *One Fish, Two Fish* and Kevin O'Meara's *Each Hour Alters One* of it in that changed London that were very real in the New Theatre Theatre Club production.

And I often think of the women of O'Meara's *Madden*, firmly in their kitchen in 1919. They have opened my imagination for a lifetime. As well as Carroll had a personal triumph in *Gertrude Stein*, Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein and Mary Tyler Moore showed us how made of stern theatrical stuff in *White Life Is A Lie* as 'Women without men was the theme in both *Three Men and A Couple White Cliffs*. All these wonderful women in *Madden*. At Stein made a charming statement about sexual harassment last season's court.

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seasons. BAM Theatre Company was most encouraging. David Jones director unveiled three unknown but worthwhile plays. Gorky's *Barbarians*, Charles MacArthur's *Johns On A Spot* and Rachel Cusk's *He And She*. All were ready for resurrection (actually Barbarians was making its American debut) and with large casts only possible in a company of this nature. A modest classical theatre company has long been a recurring dream in the American theatre. This latest attempt is certainly in the right track and deserving of praise for its brave plans and its present accomplishments. Such a repertory company allows us to see young American performers grow before our eyes. A very happy experience. At the end of the five play season it was like taking leave of a family.

Plays from this season that you know will be playing in Purgatory when you awake.

- *Charlotte*
- *Memories Of A Patient*
- *More And More*

"It will be well my soul, it is but for a season. Let us endure an hour and see injustice done."

Avignon Festival — touch and go

FRANCE

by Irving Wardle

In over twenty years of visiting the Avignon Theatre Festival I have never failed to discover something precious, but it was touch and go this year. Things got off to a bad start with the first newspaper I picked up, which carried the following space-filling announcement from the festival's new director, Bernard Favre d'Arcer: "Fest d'Avignon: une industrie comme Cannes pour le cinema" so far I am glad to report, this remains an empty threat and when M d'Arcer means, I think, is that now the old spirit of theatre populism is as dead as a doornail. Avignon had better cut its losses and concentrate on "re-orchestrated" programming, which this year brought Shakespeare and the Greeks under his umbrella.

I confess that the chance of seeing the

fabled Maria Casares in *The Women's Tale* lured me to the supporting Baudelaire series which as it turned out were both drama school shorts, while the unlikely star of Cocteau's *Ophelia* was putting in a five-minute appearance in the choric role of Time. Admittedly it was some appearance. The platform of the Cour d'Honneur was spread with a vast silk cloth, rapping and ballooning under the gusts of the mistral and finally disclosing the head of Miss Casares like a surfacing swimmer, with a twist of her body she then transformed the cloth into a gigantic hull drive and launched into the impassive lines as if she were holding the hand of a very shy dove. Momentarily she and people there returned to life.

The production was the work of the distinguished director-design partnership of Jorge Irujo and Man Riquena, who otherwise tell flat on their faces in sitting up late Shakespearean sonnets on a stage that encourages the poorest excesses of French taste.

Worse was to follow in the second Palace Pappas spectacular *Jean-Pierre Baudelaire's La Malinco* when filtered from the three ancient tragedians and Brecht, the cold story of Oedipus's children with the aim of halving the shadows of original sin around the necks of the suffering Greeks and inspired another harrowing company, getting their clung-out souls against two in-can perceptions, and wading heavily up and down a built, half-melting chocolate ice-cream representing the wall of Thebes.

Brilliant by contrast was Gerard Golan's adaptation of the *Thèmes* of Brecht, Avignon theatre, the Chère Née. Supported by a flow of sometimes magical images, this was a determinedly in our view of the trilogy, concentrating on personal relationships to the almost total exclusion of the Chorus. With performances as good as Fabrice Colomer's *Electra*, this seemed more like audacity than impudence. And if the result was not *Archetype*, it was what one would like to get and never does from Years.

The real gem of the week turned up outside the co-ordinated events, the Canadian de Cans production of *Jakob Ley's Le Annuaire Mexica*. Considering the English-speaking theatre's enthusiasm for Brecht, I have never understood why

Love, by closely related contemporary genres, has been conventionally shouldered. In the case of *Mexico* it must be the sheer problem of staging this gay "comedy" of an adopted Asian prince's disillusioning discovery of Christian superstitions. Indeed, the prince is a creature of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. His vivid heroism, how von Bülowing is a prototype of Saton controls. The blacked duchess Caspi who takes refuge in Bülowing's estate is a grand Compad Almarina. While the momentous Donna Diana who turns the Count's faith in the wake of poisoning her father and bringing the family jewels, depicts one scene of respectable literary analogs.

On the whole, as the Caspi director Michel Dubois, masterfully demonstrates, is even, choosing better, excessive, gay, stars direct, discrediting the previous one. French acting may be defined in revealing subtle shadowings, but it is unstable in black and white.

Dubois's main textual liberty is in transposing and of the final scene to the opening. This is a theatrical discussion between a young duke and his seductively phobic father, and it has the effect of preventing the ensuing play as the marriage when the old man is going off to war. This large Maxwell's parkland set is dotted with one prospect, a miniature garden, a tree that rolls dramatically down stage, crapping the, vibrant, libretto. When the dead discovery of incest drives the social machinery apart, Tandi, which, grasps a square of painted sky and disappears into the blue. In short, a framed masterpiece noted by a virtuous



Rehearsal photo of *La Comédie de l'opéra* production of *La Comédie de l'opéra* by Michel Dubois

Future Theatre Happenings abroad.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SCHOLARS IN THEATRE RESEARCH, organised by the International Federation for Theatre Research will be held in Italy, at Venice, Italia San Giorgio Ferdinando Cini. The general topic is "The Modes of Expression of non-literary theatre. Examples, definitions and analyses". Participants will discuss papers from scholars in Italy, Yugoslavia, Great Britain, West Germany, France, Canada, Belgium, Ghana, United

States, Denmark, Netherlands and Austria. Register with International Federation for Theatre Research, University Commission, Institut für Theaterwissenschaft, Hofburg, Ballhausplatz, A-1010 Vienna, Austria. 1 September 1980.

FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY will be held at Bonn, West Germany, organised by Eugene Barba, Director, Odéon Theatre, theatre-laboratory, Hochschule, Denmark. Activities combine experiments in performance, teaching and research by Western theatre scientists such as Jerro Grossnickel with representatives of Eastern traditions from Indonesia, China, India and Japan. For precise information write to Herr Hans Jürgen Nagel, Kulturamt der Stadt Bonn, Kulturwissenschaften 2-3, 5300-Bonn 3, Federal Republic of Germany. 1 October 1980.

HOUSE OF HUMOUR & SATIRE — TO POL LAIRIE COMEDY in May

We received and acted on a request from the "House of Humour and Satire" in Bulgaria for an Australian Contribution to add to their exhibition "Development of the Comedy in the Theatre". We are now waiting for material to come from all Australian theatre companies to send to Bulgaria. If anyone is interested in sending a contribution of their own, the address is: Stefan Petrovski, Director, House of Humour and Satire, Gueorgio Bulgaria.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE THIRD WORLD THEATRE: The Cyprus ITS Centre in co-operation with the General Secretariat of the ITI in Paris and the Permanent Committee for the countries of the Third World have organised this conference to be held at the Paphos Hotel in Cyprus. The main theme is "The theatre in the service of struggle for freedom". The official languages are English, French, Spanish and Greek. Application forms (membership available at the Australian ITS Centre) 20 - 26 October 1980.

FILM



IN CONFINED
WORLD

The Earthling — pretentiousness plus zoo.

The Earthling is said to have been made a cost of \$1.5 million and is an American-Australian co-production (money and stars and producers from the US, a British director and Australian sub-unit crew and animals. Especially the animals. Regardless of environment or time of day or feeding habits of the animals, they throw poems, lesser Langston does great rappers, frogmouth owls, scissor-walkers, snakes, frogs, crayfish, wild dogs, eagles, kakaburras, fish, ducks, cockatoos, you name it, they have it.

The good news is that the Australian complement is said to have been paid far more than is usually available (man of Aus producers). They earned it, having to recite some of the most banal dialogue ever committed to paper for a script. The speeches are reserved mainly for William Holden, the wailing star with constant interpolations from the other voice, an open-mouthed American juvenile named Raki Schroeder.

The director a Peter Collinson, hooked him up in my Malibu (admittedly the 1976 edition) and found this note: "British director who speaks slurred from any pretentiousness to reserve theories." The two films of his that I could see (*The Junction* and *The Madmen Job*, not bad at all. But with *The Earthling* he appears to have slipped back into arty pretentiousness plus zoo.

The film is not, however, meant for Australian audiences or at least for audiences above nine, which is about Raki Schroeder's age. It must be destined for US television. The story is about an ageing Australian named Foley who has lived in the US for forty years and returns to Australia, specifically the area around Bannington, Upper NSW, to find the shack his father built of river stone and timber



Raki Schroeder and William Holden in *The Earthling*. Photo: Tony Givner

and die there. He travels by bus as far as a township inhabited by victims of local television series, including Ray Barrett, Willie Fennell, the talented NZ actress Pat Egan and Abeyn Kuri, together with a creepy kid who works the house, some goats and an unlikely flock of geese.

The busmen in the bar run by Barrett say wise and cryptic things about tourists, a family of which then appears. Jack Thompson, Olivia Harris and Raki Schroeder, in a camper van. The couple fight while the boy looks at the scenery. The camper van slides off a ridge taking the parents. The boy climbs down several miles of rock face to find his man and find that the van just has there. In most movies it would have happened. The boy follows his fate, excited by the animals, convinced there plus a pack of nasty bush rats, until he catches up with Foley, who has abandoned a horse and is walking with the aid of a stout stick.

Foley is unacknowledging, in any the least. He makes the boy catch his own fish while

delivering pretentiousness about living off the land but never taking more than you need. He interrupts himself with the occasional haemorrhage. He talks snakes and a kangaroo that is quarantined by a woman, which gets away. The pair are followed by wild dogs, as far and witty, owned a collection of helpers as you could hope to find.

When they reach the shack it is decorated with the local wildlife, including some mixed-race species. They have a bath in a thermal pool to wash away the dirt and bruises of their hike. Raki plays with a duckling in the vitamin pool. Baked duckling?

Of course the whole thing's a joke, and a fairly boring joke at that. The story was written in the US by Larry Coller and edited by someone whose name changes me, who seems not to have related one version of the tent to another. It is beautifully photographed by Dan McAlpine, more than such an ineptly put together camera-shooting deserves.

THE THEATRE AUSTRALIAN SEPTEMBER 1999

DANCE



BY WILLIAM
TERRY BRIDGES

Dance Theatre of Harlem

There would be very few dance companies in my experience which can change their personalities from one work to the next as much as the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

This dance Ballet/line's Serenade like rhapsodic refugees in the style then perform the same choreographer's *Four Temperaments* like a mandarin and wear such pieces as *Daughter* and *Tree Gnomes* like an emblem.

The company's performance tells us as other commentators have noted, that blacks can dance classical ballet then move on to make the larger point that dance is a universal form, diverse and unsegregated.

This richness of means was one of the great joys of their Sydney season. One of the most interesting aspects was the joy of work chosen, and the way audiences were treated to them. And the whole venture started off on the wrong footing due to the way the Edgley corporation promoted them, billing them as a company that gave us "classical ballet with soul" falling only again into a bag of Ad-memo pleasures for what ballet, classical modern or in between doesn't have and (whether that was best).

Yet *Four Temperaments* and *Serenade* were masterpieces that focused the attention on the quality of the dance stage, while *Daughter*, *Manifestations* etc were apparently created to show off the strengths and personalities of the people performing them.

Serenade was danced in a soft glow of romantic effort, while *Tree Gnomes* and *Spiritual Manifestations* looked effortless, selling the ethnic background ability and heritage of the dancers as against the comfort. When those latter works took the stage, the joy words of soulless professionalism except the theatre but it was the *Ad-memo* pieces that covered new ground, both for the performers and the audience.



But our audience are so over-orientated and apathetic that they don't respond to anything but the fireworks and what I would call "pyrotechnic pieces." They read a ballet like *Braille* only find comfort in the bits that stick out. They palpably were along wanting to see "black dancers" not "dancers dancing" but if the popular reaction to the Australian Ballet is anything to go by, they don't want to see "dancers dancing" any more.

It was the most precious of aspects of all the performers in the Harlem ballet that they did every one of their pieces with the same application and attention. It isn't their fault that while application and "presence" will help get over *Daughter*, *Daughter* and *Manifestations* it won't be the main product in *Serenade* and *Four Temperaments*.

But it was the latter two works that were the greatest joy to me, and at the same time revealed the varying levels of technique and "give" in the company. Although the women's gestures are open and large, they aren't full. They look at their almost apprehensive lost in the patently and deficiencies of their material. The men certainly cover up their faults with bravado and personality.

Both things are absolutely necessary in a Ballet/line ballet. Gesture must be big,

wide and strong, not tilted and while personality is called for it must always be the personality that the choreographer and the music call for. It is the movement and the quality that the dancer gives it that makes a Ballet/line ballet "big" not the dancer "strong" it.

Serenade was premiered in 1915, the first ballet that Ballet/line or Ballet master of the Ballets Russes created in America for American dancers. It is one of the first suppressors of "American" dance and the thin edge of the wedge for a company that has now become the major dance nation of the world. It was perhaps symbolic that it was one of the first works Mr B decided to see on the Dance Theatre of Harlem, an entirely new venture in the time.

Serenade has been called a subtle classical exercise. Everything is there somewhere. Virtuoso technique is not called for, except in some demanding solo passages. More necessary is a bit in the torso (which the Harlem women have) endless breath, a soaring line and the ability to sustain a phrase (which the Harlem women often didn't have). *Serenade* has little to do with steps and everything to do with dancing.

It more than made up for the apologetic "manifestations" of *Daughter* and the hard catchments of *Manifestations* that followed it.

When I first saw Mitchell's *Manifestations* at last year's Stars of World Ballet, I couldn't help laughing out loud at its irony, serious-mindedness. A year's space hasn't changed my attitude so it can be.

One doesn't get real dance or even real drama in *Manifestations*, one gets some awfully difficult (and they're created to look shamefully difficult) postures and moments about Adam Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

The serpent slithers down a rope because a rope is put there and that's what one usually does with a rope. He gives Eve a real apple to eat, the trouble starts and the choreography moves into overdrive, looking unbalanced and "hot".

One could call it pure form, but Mr Mitchell has put so much "manifestations" into his choreography that one has to find a stronger word to describe the piece. I'd call it a self-made lunch. But at least Mr Mitchell's movement vocabulary was inventive enough to stop it falling into the mid-ranking classic-ballet analysis of John Butler's *After Eden*.

If only the female dancers in the

Pasqua. Dancin' a version of the big pua de dans from *Pasquata* could have done something to wake this work, but they seemed to think it as silly as any real commitment of belief would. *Pasquata* (or at least the pua de dans because that is all there is left of the work) is best danced in a gala programme by the Bolshoi or Leningrad Kirov; they're the only ones that can take the giggling queues and still courtesies of the piece to mean something in dance terms. The Harlem dancers are uncomfortable and put upon in it that one couldn't see beyond the rigorous academic clutter of it to anything resembling a grand sense of sequence. The bolshoi costumes didn't help much either.

The major work of the entire season in my opinion, and one that we marks didn't get to see, had it not been for the indisposition of one of the dancers, substituted as partners in *Street Jack*. Act 2 was Balanchine's 1946 masterpiece *The Four Temperaments*.

In terms of movement *The Four Temperaments* is unique. It would be easy to think of successions in Balanchine's repetitive *Agon* (perhaps, or *Spartakus* and *Pavane*) but hard to name any formatters with the possible exception of *Agon*. For the most part, *The Four Temperaments* is a movement vocabulary sprung fully formed from the brow of its

creator.

Harvesting its title from the equally commissioned Hindemith score of the same name, Balanchine created a series of general tableaux using the musical markings of *Adagio*, *presto* and *allegro* transformed into the dance possibilities of the Medusa's of diagnosis of the four bodily humours: *passive* (melancholy), *angry* (choleric), *impassive* (phlegmatic) and *confident* (sanguine).

Out of this hard and lost stream came a cornucopia of dance possibilities, illuminating the manners through the motions, the humours through the dance postures. It is this division of aspects, played throughout the formal patterns of an ensemble that I liked, made the *Thème* of Harlem choose the ballet as highlight their strengths in a work that is a real test of ability and technique. They achieved their aims in the bodies, performances and that is what makes me value them far more than the rest of the applause-making free-lance they chose to adopt.

The Four Temperaments is unpredictable and fantastic in the way it occurs in all the extreme possibilities of motion possible: low lunges, sharp stabbing steps, lifts at half height, turns in place, dragged steps, reverses and

reverses and contraposed stepping. It is high powered, high protein ballet that audience (and critics) could feed off for as long as they would only feed.

The ballet also has two unusual parts for the men and again this is one of the reasons why Mitchell chose it to show off his company: the melancholy variation for instance, with its movement, still and stolid, or the phlegm, malleability of the phlegmatic with all these unexpected turns and gyrations of the arms and legs. Phlegmatic especially gives a clear light on the material of a dancer. The moment, for example, where the man suddenly finds himself snapping his hand around an unexpected angle or leaning or his disconnected hands and realising that they are not just hands on a stage they being signals. But what eventually makes the whole ballet great now and for ever, as well as a departure from previous forms is that it doesn't revel in emotion revealed or covert, it is an intellectual disavowal of aspects of personality, partitioned in moments of architectural grandeur and surprise, it shows us human forms in the formal mathematics of spatial and bodily arrangement: palpable emotions, portrayed as a parable.

Along with the (unquestionably modern figure) is what makes the Dance Theatre of Harlem a ballet company of importance: it makes us look at dancers dancing, focuses us to see movement on its own terms, not ours, and thus opens the spread of our sensibilities that by wider.

When it came to the ensemble of men performing Robert North's *Four Gossams*, we were back on familiar territory. The piece was originally created for the whole London Contemporary Dance Theatre and again I would presume that Mr Mitchell chose it because it was an ample opportunity to show off the men of the company, seeing that *Pasquata* had shown off the women.

Four Gossams adds up to an animated Mr University, covered with mucus. It says it's sending every thing up but its glorifying it. It is was done that I suppose it would be having in the extreme, but all the men sold it so well that they made it palatable in a pleasing gawking sort of way. It is not real dance of course, just a spec, gobble of poor, sophisticated, elaborate and contrived, not making any sense in its own right, but designed to exposed, express and elicit as performers. When it wants, you think it wants to get an audience appreciation of male movement, a liberation of the dancer, by the end you know what it wants: applause.

Applause is what it gets but the Dance Theatre of Harlem has got to go along way yet in drawing an audience that will make it valued as a dance company, and not just a collection of dancers.



Australian Ballet Report: China Tour

BY SUE DAVIDSON

After the problems in Korea had forced the cancellation of that leg of the tour, and with some additional help from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australia-China Council, the full complement of Australia's national ballet company was on its way to Peking on Saturday June 14, 1980.

The China Performing Company was the entrepreneurial body responsible for handling the visits of foreign companies to China and their superbly prepared schedule impressed everyone with its practical efficiency.

The premiere in the Tianjiao (Bridge of Heaven) Theatre on June 18 was received with rapturous praise. The Chinese were totally absorbed in what was going on in the action at all times, and discussed everything freely throughout the performance, pointing out things of particular interest to each other. The Australians had been warned about this custom in China (dating from the times when the Emperor used to come and go as will during performance of the Chinese Opera which lasts four to five hours), so the dancers weren't surprised. They had also been warned not to expect loud applause from the Chinese, so they were more than agreeably surprised when at the end of the performance the whole theatre erupted in a roar of approval.

The Australian Ballet's Music Director, Dobbs Franks, went ahead of the rest of the company in order to rehearse the orchestras. The recent visits of the Stuttgart and Boston Ballet companies were presented with taped music; in fact the only ballet company to present a season in China with live musicians was London Festival Ballet which travelled in seven orchestras in 1979. Consequently there was great excitement among the Chinese musicians when it was announced that The Australian Ballet would use the China Opera and Ballet Orchestra in Peking and the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra in Shanghai. Both these orchestras were conducted by Dobbs Franks, the first Westerner to conduct a Chinese orchestra. He speaks no Chinese, but he was ably helped in translation by Sun Gongxin, an expert music interpreter. After a few initial problems with 3-4 bars played for dancing (in opposed to listening to) all went well and the orchestras did the dances great. In fact, the Shanghai Philharmonic asked

Dobbs Franks for a concert arrangement of the *Don Quixote* score to include in their repertoire; they also asked him to recommend works of Australian composers to them for the same reason. Cultural exchange on the music level had been initiated.

Following its triumphant premiere in Peking, the company attended a performance given by students and graduates of the Peking Dance Institute, (which has been in operation since 1954). The two hour programme included classical *pas de deux*, and national dances of China and several other countries. After the performance, principal artists Marilyn Rowe and Kelvin Cox remained behind to give a three hour coaching lesson in the *Don Quixote* Act III *pas de deux* to the graduate students. The visitors were most impressed by the high standard achieved at a very early age in these dancers' careers. The Institute has two hundred students in residence — to give an idea of its size — and they take their secondary education concurrently with their dance training. A special feature is the seven hundred seat theatre where students present (in costume and with scenery) the classical and indigenous repertoires which forms part of their curriculum.

The Australian Ballet gave three performances of *Don Quixote* in Peking. Marilyn Rowe and Kelvin Cox opened the season in the principal parts of Kito and Bata, at the running Luis Soffie and David Beach took over, and Ann Jenner and Dale Baker led the company in the free release, watched by an audience in the millions, which was the third performance in Peking.

One must have preceded them to Shanghai, (perhaps it was the TV performance from Peking) because when they arrived there, they found hundreds of people queuing in the hope of buying returned tickets for the coming three performances, and as they were waiting to the auditoriums, people began applauding them in the streets!

Inside the Municipal Auditorium, the packed house gave a reception to the performance the like of which had not been equalled in any of the dancers' memories; the ten minute *pas de deux* and variations in Act III proved a sensation and there was literally non-stop applause throughout. The Chinese are shellied by lists of technical virtuosity and the dancing of Rowe and Cox that night gave them all they could have wished for. At the final curtain the entire audience sitting in the stalls section rushed forward to the orchestra pit and gave the company an ovation it will long remember. The morale of the dancers at an all-time high, they gave performances in China that will long be remembered by all who saw them.

In Shanghai Marilyn Rowe and Kelvin Cox again worked with students and graduates, this time from the Shanghai Institute, meanwhile Therese Power and Qing Phillips was teaching them a *pas de deux* from *Cinderella*, and Joane Blanche was working with others on the *Pandango* from *Don Quixote*. Everyone was busy, working together or watching each other and learning. The Chinese are very keen to learn and the company loved their simple, kind, talented people with an apparently total capacity for humility and learning. Artistic Director Marilyn Jones murmured at one stage "It's certainly rewarding teaching dancers like this, but I think there is an awful lot we can learn here too!"

Meanwhile, and almost parallel with the China Tour, we saw the start of the inaugural tour of The Dancers of The Australian Ballet. Their first season opened in Canberra, on May 31. An extension of The Australian Ballet South is not (yet) far off, and since, The Dancers Company is Marilyn Jones' baby. The idea had been mooted before, but by working together on it, she and Peter Baker, The Australian Ballet's Administrator, turned the idea into a reality this year.

The name of The Dancers are manifold — they are: a) expanded ensembles by playing the major country cities of the Commonwealth, (50 present, in the other capital cities, works which hitherto have been staged only in Sydney and Melbourne, to bridge the gap of the overnight leap from Australian Ballet School graduate status to that of experienced artist within the ranks of The Australian Ballet, and d) last, but not least, provide an entity within which Australian choreographers can, with adequate time as their disposal, develop their creative ability — in workshop and performance. (The first of these workshops is planned for October.)

The Dancers Company is a professional entity. It is headed by principal and solo artists of The Australian Ballet and the members of its corps are all graduates of The Australian Ballet School. Their repertoire for 1980 includes Giesels and a couple bill consisting of *Clanran's Principality*, *Prof. McMillan's Les Femmes* and *Jiri Kihm's Symphonies* or *D. Judging* from purely machine and critical angles. The Dancers have proved more than equal to the challenge of the first two acts of their careers. On among the development in their performance, both as individuals and as an ensemble, in the short time since The Dancers Company premiered the inaugural tour, can also be seen effective the cohesion of the main company will be in the future, in ensuring that The Australian Ballet's standards in technique and artistry are kept at the highest level.

OPERA



BY DAVID
CORDER

Katya, Rigoletto and Pilgrim's Progress

Despite the worst that Sydney's nasty winter climate could do, July was quite a month for the Australian Opera, quite a good month, that is, which could well have been quite spectacular given a spot more kerbside action on the part of the fans.

I Masnadieri, whose opening I reviewed in these columns last month, went through a transient period when two of its four main characters fell ill, and neither of the other openings of the month — a revival of *Rigoletto* and a new production of *Katerina Kabanova* — was an unqualified success.

Yet it was clear even at opening that both productions were destined for a good deal better things, even if they had run in a little, turning the sort of uncontrollable problems that beset *I Masnadieri*.

And so it proved, at least in the case of *Rigoletto* within a couple of weeks of opening it had settled down thoroughly and became one of the most satisfying realisations of this great middle period Verdi opera I have ever seen.

For practically the whole month under review, in fact, these two Verdi operas monopolised the Opera Theatre, for *Katya* did not premiere until Monday, July 28, and I had the good fortune to attend both *Masnadieri* and *Rigoletto* on the Saturday just before.

It was a very attractive and enjoyable Verdi marathon, that day throwing the two works as it did, into immediate juxtaposition and focusing attention on the relative strengths and weaknesses of their current Australian Opera productions. By and large, though, both directors have done marvelously by the works entrusted to them. Peter Skerfving's *I Masnadieri* brilliantly glazes over the undesirable aspects of that piece, and John Copley's 1972 *Rigoletto*, which had already been run in quite thoroughly

over eight years of regular revivals, benefited this time round from a good deal of attention and rethinking from the original producer himself.

In contrast, *I Masnadieri* is a piece that can send the ear into paroxysms of ecstasy, well enough sung, but which has just about no depth at all worth the plaudits. Spectacularly sung, it can of course not only hold the stage but rivet an audience... but never for a moment can it move an audience to tears or produce shivers of uplifting inspiration to tempt the spirit.

Given Joan Sutherland, Robert Alfinan, Donald Smith and Clifford Grant in top form, or something approximating it, *I Masnadieri* was a marvel, deprived of two of them for most of the night as was the case the second time I saw it, the piece was virtually unable to hold the stage at all. It is



Richard Marsh as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*.
Photo: Graham Green

clearly not an opera to resist frequent revival for the simple reason that Verdi lavished nothing but treasures on it, so that, that is or just about so, said.

Copley's rethink was evident at a great many points in this season's revival of *Rigoletto*. The production now underscores more effectively than before several details of the libretto that tend to escape the notice of the vast majority of any predominantly English-speaking audience viewing the piece sung in Italian. The vital (in dramatic terms) appearance of Monstrone in Act I whose curse on Rigoletto sets the dramatic stage for the tragedy that is to develop has been upgraded, this time round, from a cursory passing vignette to a downstage moment of

high drama — with Monstrone strategically positioned between the Duke and Rigoletto so it can be made visually clear that his vituperations are levelled against the one and secondly, when he physically turns round against the other.

It is, of course, one of the great strengths of thoroughly credible companies such as the Australian Opera that they can afford to lavish singers of such quality as Heather Begg on her parts like Maddalena and Monterone (which was sung splendidly on this occasion by Bruce Martin) for both roles are vital to the drama of the piece and even despite their brevity have the potential to impress an audience vividly.

There were a number of other points too where Copley's rethink paid obvious dividends. There was more controlled elegance in the brief formal dance sequences in the opening scene and thus more contrast with the low-clad writhers and the garbly comicality vying on television than otherwise dominates the screen, and this pair's writhers approached a good deal nearer the ideal of the male body beautiful than their forebears.

In Act II the cakewalks of the courtiers in the teeth of Rigoletto's impassioned concern for the virtue of his daughter was more pointed, and the fashion of Peter van der Stoep's Masaro to Rigoletto's grovelling quite eloquent. Thus the overall dramatic effect of the scene, and in particular Rigoletto's violent outburst, *Vide Hanc de Courtibus*, was greatly enhanced.

In historic terms, Raymond Myers' Rigoletto was in superb form at both of the performances I attended this season, but he was not in top form's really on opening night. By the second performance a bit more than a fortnight later, not only he but every one else in the cast seemed to be in top form and the combined result was really quite memorable.

Joan Carden's Gilda was particularly ravishing this year dramatically controlled as always but with a new vocal sublimeness that was not present before. The coloratura squawks of her Credo scene were quite marvellous, the way she toddled off to bed on the mouth of the echo of a high trill quite spell-binding.

And the post-dellatoro scene between Carden and Myers was very touching for its tender vocal appeal and for its visual impact — she in her nightgown struggling valiantly to cover herself with a bedsheet, he thoroughly convulsed in the distraught latter trying to afford comfort where no comfort can be given.

Donald Wharmie was also once again as toweringly impressive as Spontichelli as one could wish for, singing with his best, most full-throated sonority, dominating the stage with his menacing presence when he glided out of the shadows to arrest Rigolotto in Act I, and making gruesome preparations for the murder-to-come throughout most of Act III.

Amore Austin, a newcomer to the *Aggolino* as the Duke of Mantua, was done up quite dashing, black wig and beard and all, he was absolutely convincing as the motivated man and, though his Quella in Quella was worrying, his singing improved markedly as the evening progressed and he was completely well induced by the end. His seems to be on the brink of developing into a most satisfying Verdi tenor indeed. But his dashing new costume led to a glaring vocal boo-boo in Act II, where the courtier is now putting him in a different costume to the one the duke is actually wearing.

On opening night, Richard Boyce married me by starting off Act I at such a breakneck pace one might have been pardoned for thinking he was trying to catch some train half an hour before the scheduled breaking time, but things quickly settled down and finally he produced a finely wrought reading of the score which revealed fully the incredible wealth of its musical interest as compared with those of *A Traveller*.

And everyone concerned gave of their best at both performances. I was, when quartet time rolled round, in a thoroughly satisfying rendition of one of the great operatic chivalries, particularly due to the addition of the lovely richness of Heather Begg's deep mezzo to the vocal mix.

The new production of *Kari Kabanova* was an undeniable musical triumph for conductor Mark Elder and the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra, opening, and a vocal triumph for its set designer, Roger Butler, and to a lesser extent for its costume designer, Mavis Hyslop. It was a more equivocal success in vocal and dramatic terms. Not that there was anything to complain of in producer David Pountney's general handling of the requirements of the piece or, indeed, of the casting, which produced moments in the event that were every bit as awfully mouth-watering as they had promised to be on paper.

But words were often not comprehensible, even from such normally well-articulated performers as Marilyn Richardson and Robert Gard. Partly this was no doubt a balance problem arising directly and inevitably from Rankin's very liberal orchestration, and, partly, it is, as it arose from the nature of Butler's set which is appropriately stark and simple



Amore Austin (Austin) and Richard Boyce (Richard) in the Act 1, *Kari Kabanova*. Photo: Bruce J. Jones

and thus devoid of walls or other resonant surfaces to act as reflector boards for vocal sound. Rightly or wrongly, I got the impression that much of the sound was being dissipated in the upper reaches of the stage tower area, and vocal focus was being undermined by excessive echo. I am sure things will improve as the season progresses.

With that reservation, this *Karia* was superbly cast and performed. Marilyn Richardson is absolutely right as the sole fully human character tragically trapped in a world otherwise peopled by limited provincial characters of the worst sort, particularly her husband Tichon, an unfeeling caricature of a man played magnificently by Robert Gard, and her thoughtless lover Boris, convincingly portrayed by Gregory Dewdney.

Richardson radiated beauty, intelligence and womanly charm on her first entrance, effectively co-ordinated with the music as she appeared over the horizon for spunge just as the orchestra played her lush, sunny signature tune, underscored as every turn, throughout the evening, the difference between her enlightenment and external beauty and the consciousness of the characters who peopled the world around her.

The uncomplicated young lovers, Vanya and Yarnata, were well portrayed by Ron Stevens and Kathleen Moore. He perfectly and in a role he can act marvellously and sing with just the right sound, she clearly on the brink of great things.

And a considerable personal triumph was scored on opening night by Helen Rankin in the role of thoroughly engaging, role of Tichon's mother Kabanicha. (The role is of course much smaller than that of the title character, and therefore Rankin's achievement was of distinctly more modest proportions than Richardson's Kabanicha is an awful person, bullying everyone from her son and his wife to her own lover Dikoy (played a little too insistently by Neil Wootton-Smith). She is the epitome of insensitivity: the character who provokes the suicide of Karys but a totally oblivious to the destruction of the latter's tragedy that is being enacted around her. Unlike the Kabanichas in *Aggolino* she is a totally patched character, one in whom any audience would be hard put to find much to admire. It was a considerable achievement of Rankin's performance that she could somehow provide a certain admiration of her primitive integrity even despite her colossal bloody-mindedness.

Even on opening night, this *Karia* had a good many moments of electrifying tension and mixed beauty, once it has been given the opportunity to mature fully. It will no doubt be one of the Australian Opera's most memorable achievements all round.

But! reserve must be made also of the Australian premiere season of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Pilgrim's Progress*, presented by Canberra Opera with a considerable amount of varied support from the Canberra community at large at the Canberra School of Music in mid-July. This work, based of course on John Bunyan, has never managed to hold the stage, lacking much in the way of dramatic incident and having only cerebral character. The pilgrim himself, it might more aptly be described as an ascetic or Larian, or even a synphony with choral supplicants.

The performance itself was an unequivocal triumph for Canberra baritone Colin Mann, who was required to be on stage almost all night, and conductor Donald Miller and the superb orchestra of quite sufficient quality to cope with the truly symphonic demands of the score. Brian Bell's production was effective within the limits imposed by the capabilities of the opera company's chorists augmented by a children's choir and the voices of the Canberra Choral Society.

All round it was a worthy effort which proved the annual event of the piece but did not demonstrate that the judgement on history has been wrong in neglecting it as a work of the musical theatre.

DAVID GYGER is Editor of *Opera Australia*.

THEATRE/ACT



SEAT BELT
MARGARET
DE VOS

Visually static

TRAITORS MESH

by Margaret Wells

Creators in: Stephen Sewell, Australian Theatre Workshop, The Canberra Playhouse, 12pm and 7pm, 23-24/90

Director: Warwick Rastler, Stage Manager: John Purdie, Production Manager: Emma Black, Set: Peter Haines and Chris Piggott, Props: Alan Wilkinson, Technical: Ian Shipley, Lighting: Ian Shipley, Musical Director: Bruce

Lord, Sette: Tamara Ross, Krasa: John Lillis, Anna: Catherine Jean Moore, Babes: Terry Bartlett, Credits: The Gaiety, Music: Graham Neville, Margaret De Vos

(Continued)

Set in: Graham Pitt, National Theatre, 12pm and 7pm, 23-24/90

Director: Don Macgregor, Designer: Colin Williams, Cost: Helen, Hair: Graham Rastler, Props: Alan Shipley, Musical: Alan Shipley

The Australian Theatre Workshop, mainly in the immediate person of Ralph Wilson, has been around in Canberra for a long time, fighting up the dark depths of Children Street Hall every couple of months with interesting Productions (highly available of course) of interesting Plays with Good Actors. This is a combination almost unknown anywhere else in Canberra. The telephone on Ralph Wilson's desk is a hot-line to the best actors, and Warwick Rastler has joined the hot-line network and brought in a few actors of his own who have developed their acting skills as he developed his directing.

Pai Gulan is one of these actors. His magnificent performance in *The Playhouse* had more than earned him his place on the Playhouse stage, now that the Arts Council has extended its sponsorship from Fortitude Theatre to ATW. There have been masterings and masterings for some time now, to the effect that it is a disgrace that Our National Capital hasn't got a full-time professional theatre company to grace the boards of the in-qually named Playhouse. So over the past year or so, a number of groups have been sponsored to perform in the otherwise prohibitively expensive Canberra Theatre Centre. It started off

with Fortitude Theatre as a costume in the Canberra Theatre Centre at lunchtimes. Then moved gradually into the Playhouse every now and then "while theatre companies undervalue".

Warwick Rastler's production of *Traitors* is one of the most impressive of these "undervalue" so far, with an excellent cast and a gripping play. If you don't know anything about the Russian Revolution and like me have always thought of Lenin and Stalin as being pretty much the same person, the first half of the play is a great masterly thriller, and you sit on the edge of your seat frantically trying to get through the drills of political information for a clue.

Eventually, it boils down to the simple proposition that Anna is a member of a faction within the Communist Party, opposed to Stalin, and that's who she goes in terms of her life and yet one will be such a committed revolutionaries. All good clear Anna's Christine. Then having worked all that out you can at last relax and watch Anna and Krasa do dance and flawless performance as usual from John Colley, currently, slide to the door.

And very funny it was too, with a dash of snarky wit and dash, narrow ladies, snarky and severely clad. Only Krasa, credible worker, now seem to be again returning from a murderous mission in Britain has acquired a taste for lemons, peppermints and the soft life and a very well-cut pretentious.

One of the traps of the use of political plots is that the characters tend to do an awful lot of talking while the better scenes were very well handled indeed, moving his actors about the stage is not perhaps one of Warwick Rastler's greatest strengths. Though the first half with the two women, goes at the ready, poised to fight and die in the blood-red spotlight, was unforgettable.

The set fragments the action somewhat, the actors seemed to be entering themselves onto the stage rather than coming. With lantern beams and boarding houses sprang right, would police officer upstage center an empty room (the Anna-Krasa love nest), upstage left and an anonymous area downstage serving as station platforms, bars, art galleries, and various assorted streets the action tended to spent awkwardly boxed in at times. Still it was a very satisfying piece of theatre, not the least because this is one of the most successful of the audition for a nucleus for a theatre company for our National Capital.

Being between Sydney and Melbourne and yet being part of neither of them our National Capital plays host to a large number of companies looking for material ground. One of the more recent of these "Australia in the Multicultural Figure", brought the National Theatre Company here from their Sydney home where they are affiliated with the Ensemble. The play, *Mesh* is a multipassional 11F commitment theatre piece, "to play about prejudice, alienation and communication, a talking good war, told with humour and hope". The playwright, Graham Pitt, has an extreme facility with entertaining dialogue, and while this is again a further visually, some plays, there is plenty of emotional spacing, with a crawling Australian snarky humour faced with a Greek subterranean comradish, however and minor that be and a new worker, a Turkish woman, to help them lift a work space that has been raised impossibly high. After some trauma then come to a compromise and march into the sunset to confront the future, managers in comradeship together. This hope and humour!

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL LITERATURE AND THEATRE BOARDS

PLAYWRIGHTS-IN- RESIDENCE

The Literature Board invites joint applications from playwrights and theatre companies (Tf) and professionals for assistance under the playwright-in-residence program for 1991.

Subsidies are usually determined on a 2-1 basis and range for a period of one to six months.

Guidelines and application forms may be obtained by writing to the Literature Board, PO Box 302, North Sydney 2060.

Closing date for applications, which must be made on the appropriate forms is 30 September 1990. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

THEATRE/OLD



Excruciating naturalism

LET'S TWIST AGAIN

by Veronica Kelly

Let's Twist Again by Bob George. La Brea Theatre Brisbane Qld. Opened July 11, 1988.
Director: director: Anne Munn. Lighting: Martin Williamson. Stage Manager: Michael Newman.
Cast: Les David Humphreys, Laine Gillian Tye, Joan Joanne Hollingsworth, Graham Peter Dando, Les Eric Flemming, Shirley Kelly Perry, John Bruce Newman (Mrs Ann).

Patrons hoping to relive a cheerful piece of colourful nostalgia were in for a far from pleasant shock with *Let's Twist Again*: the latest in La Brea's Australian play season. Such transmutable bits of the past appear as sexy E.H. Hobbins feats and the Mountain Hat Dance, but serve little cognate purpose. Not that there isn't potential gold to be mined from nostalgia or from assessing the actors, but this script appears so confused in its basic focus that little of value

eventuates other than a lengthy patch of generally unconvincing naturalism from which swerves with startling abruptness a ponderous piece of moralisation about, I think, the desire for eternal youth.

The unconvincing naturalism has as its occasion a 1975 reunion in an RSL hall amongst old acquaintances - one could not say friends - after 50 years separation. John, the chief organiser of the reunion, is a rather gravely and well-observed specimen of a particular brand of Australian male infantism, apocryphal and generic immature attitudes, but even this in unadorned life development occurs except for a belated attempt to extend the character towards a symbolic purpose, of which more later. As the couples line up the marital and inter-spousal approaches into cop gear, and in testimony of not invariance it sticks there throughout. "Shut up, you bitch" would be a fair example of a thematic insight emerging from dialogue.

The reason behind the reunion turns out to be the fifteenth anniversary of John's first screw over with Joan, now married to a married insurance salesman - in this very hall, or rather in a car outside, during the middle no other. Joan refuses to accept that occasion to the (French?) lover and gives him the bad news. "You're old! We're all old!" Whereupon the play takes off for barbed Australian myth-and-games country, the only authentic bit of satiric nostalgia the right provided for this venue.

Violence might! John goes nuts and tries to exponentially increase a young girl's in-

pile of shame so that she may keep forever her youth. His wife catches him playing with machines and nags like Mom he is father, intones "you shall not grow old as we that are left grow old" and becomes in a spotlight and a rhythmic impasse. End. All in vain in my opinion, as patently the chief dickhead has already attained eternal youth through his own arrested mental development somewhere between the playground and the machine.

The author's programme notes suggest a potential perspective for assessing the play's purpose. At the time of its writing in 1975 "nostalgia seemed to reflect a culture that had suddenly lost confidence in itself and in the future, and it was having to refer backwards all the time for its inspiration. That lack of confidence is still with us." It's not difficult to guess at specific events in 1975 that made the clock go backwards, but if the RSL hall setting of the play is supposed to recall that particular Anniversary Day it is a remote point of reference to which the play itself pays little attention.

The allegory, if it is that, concentrates on the psycho-sexual but legitimises an arena which salutes of the order of Williamson have been and left their mark. Many explicit themes are explicit in the actual scenes, the hullo-hup whoring and cheating which poses for "matrimony", as various sexual positions, and either of these could have developed as a valid metaphor for the national psycho-malaise. However, when John goes on his Mad Dancer regression campaign while it is at least logical from what has gone on that the women be women the eternal youth theme, incessantly and loudly stated, is dramatically extraneous and forced.

Of the generally inexperienced cast Bruce Newman is considerably revealing in the loudmouth mental malady, and it is entirely the script's fault that he must play the sort of role that makes the audience confound actor and character in one vast characterless aversion. The rest of the characters are less than one-dimensional, and Sean Mee's direction does its best to substitute physical for the non-forthcoming dramatic energy La Brea's wonderful idea of an Australian play season, though why not make it a permanent policy? does show that not every total script is successful. The enterprise which brought in the wonderful *Room on One Down* can also unapologetically knock out scripts like *Let's Twist Again*. This may be a contradiction inherent in the present policy, but I can't think it is unresolvable.



Joanne Hollingsworth (Joanne) and Graham Peter Dando (John) in Let's Twist Again, Anne Munn, Director.

Vital and Theatrical

THE TEMPEST

by Elizabeth Perkins

The Tempest by William Shakespeare. The Glee and Tonic Theatre Troupe. Townsville Civic Theatre Qld. Opened July 5, 1980.

Director: Bryan Nelson, Design: Bryan Nelson, Music: Nelson, Stage Manager: Doug Gilchrist, Lighting: Keith Harrison, Costumes: Roddy McIlhenny, Props: Glasgow, Choreography: Judith Anderson, Special Effects: John Kavan, Hair: Mark.

Cost Actor: Ben Hamilton, Selection: Peter Hyde, Cost Actress: John Harrison, Costume: Michael Allen, Props: Michael McIlhenny, Selection: Peter Hyde, Music: David Bailey, Selection: Alan Fisher, Props: Robert Arthur, Selection: Judith Anderson, Hair: Timothy Draper, Costume: John Hill, Captain: Rod Williams, Selection: Sam Macintosh. (P/T - 100)

Bryan Nelson's production of *The Tempest* with the Glee and Tonic Theatre Troupe and musical action was another venture into community theatre that pleased those bored with traditional barbedwire but did not offend Shakespeare purists.

The open stage design made the move from the outdoor Fair to the play made a natural transition, and a natural simplicity of movement, music and acting controlled most aspects of the production. It was a young people's play, with the older generation like Prospero himself, keeping benevolent control. The young musicians on floating platforms, and the youthful troops of actors rombling all over the stage appeared both free and disciplined. Ariel played by twelve year old Timothy Draper, was a delight, fun, open, handling lines with intelligence and feeling and moving nimbly and gracefully.

Ariel's brief transformations into Sebastian and Harman were probably intended to show that when Ariel was so Shakespeare's greatness and popular mythos are so true. If Ariel had been replaced by a muscular adult for these changes the idea might have gained theatrical poise, but the effect did not come off because Timothy Draper's Ariel was, frankly, a more imaginative creation than Michael Supper and Harman.

The shapes and tones conjured up by Prospero were of a different order, and it would be hard to find a production where they were more amusingly or damagingly conceived. Ceres was played by Sandy Yoon as calm, looking and singing magnificently, the very image of fertility. Juno descended in a canopy and was played by soul singer Sharon Malmgren with the time a very successful blending of

Shakespeare and the twentieth century. It is chauvinist, perhaps, but accurate to say that these concludes were more vital and theatrical than the shaky comes in the 1979 BBC Television production of *The Tempest*.

With a few exceptions, the other roles were also taken by very young players, and while the older people were adequate, Judith Anderson as Miranda and the comparatively inexperienced John Harrison as Ferdinand were graceful and appealing with a freshness that owed as much to their acting as to their youth. Alan Cooke and Peter Hyde gave firm performances as Antonio and Sebastian, and Chris Hill, another younger player, showed promise as Caliban whose deformity was achieved with striking simplicity by pain and movement.

Robert Arthur is an excellent and versatile actor but his youthful voice and appearance did not quite meet the demands that Shakespeare makes on Prospero to control the whole play. Prospero is an austere role and needs behind it a suggestion of great wisdom and suffering.



Sarah Fox (Ceres) in her celebration masque in TGT's *Glee and Tonic's The Tempest*

which was not felt in the first night performance. The best scene where Ariel's play for Alonso and Gonzalo moves Prospero to compassion was one of the play's most dramatic moments and more of this intensity would have given depth to Prospero's part. Yet Prospero did command the performance in a very real way, and his Epilogue, like the whole production, had an attention to detail which 'fits all facts'.

The one disappointment in this production was that the grace and music of the actors' movements did not pass into

their spoken lines. Articulation was almost perfect, an achievement in itself, but in a production where there was so much flowing movement, the speech trod dutifully and intelligently on the ground. We certainly got the meaning of the lines but we missed the experience.

But when the challenge of this kind of production is granted, with a professional company guiding dozens of young and amateur actors to an imaginative and coherent performance the result must be considered very satisfying theatre.

If it's Williamson it must be good

TRAVELLING NORTH

by Sylvia de Costa-Roque

If it's David Williamson it must be good. That's the way a lot of people think at the moment and with *Travelling North* they are right.

The Queensland Theatre Company's production of the play at Brisbane's SGO Theatre left nobody in any doubt that if you put on a Williamson you get full houses. And if you put on a Williamson play starring such seasoned and good performers as John Bruce and Ron Graham, the husband and wife pair from television's *Cornac Haines* old-time radio comic Wilfrid Fennell and David Crenshaw, you don't just get full houses, they are veritably packed.

The play is well-known, the mature couple who are supposed to know better who go off up north together to live in an loving their respective families behind with nobody to do the babysitting.

It isn't a pretentious play. It doesn't carry hidden mysterious messages of drugs and sex. Ordinary people doing ordinary things that people can relate to as if they were working at mirror images. The sort of thing Williamson is so good at.

Director Alan Edwards, who more be pleased with the box office success of recent QTC productions, got first class performances from all concerned. John Bruce and his two budding daughters really looked as though they were related.

There were some criticisms. Like why did Ron Graham age so much and so quickly, when John aged not at all? It is true what they say about women being the stronger sex? And why did the set have to look so tropical? It looked more like darken Samarra than somewhere just north of Byron Bay.

These quibbles aside, *Travelling North* travelled up north very well indeed.

not lost on the audience.

The production's most positive benefit to the Company's future development must be the emphasis placed on collaboration and ensemble work. The director freely and warmly rewards his debt to researcher and designer alike. And although his hand is clearly evident in the overall staging — with the action of Argentine tango, dance numbers and comedy routines and also (gasp!) of Dennis Potter's memorable *Prisoner* *Prisoner* — there is no sense of one mind imposing its view on others, whether they be performers or collaborators. The only regret must be the short run is finite is eternal.

At the same time as the STC was giving us a view of the more dramatic (though not strictly past), the Stage Company was performing *Door For The Moon* set in the Tullies (Act I) and the early 1950s (Act II) as the theme of the rising boom and collapse. Yet, oddly, the historically more recent second years distance us from the character and situation. Much of this was attributable to the setting, which sought to capture the sense of period in a style resembling telegraphic. That is, isolated observations and turns of phrase from the time were thrown in so hard an exchange that might otherwise have seemed undercurrent in its social and historical context. And when this was linked to a dramatic structure which seemed uncertain whether it could accommodate five or seven different ideas for one play, the result was inevitably diffuse and confused. This is not to deny that the author, Bill Agg, has talent. The opening scene of Act II, set in an *on* *de* equivalent to Ayckbournland, is cleverly structured and the writing sparkles. It was played with wit and humour by the actors and suggested that with more attention to basic dramaturgical questions, Mr Agg has the equipment to write a pointed and accurate social comedy.

But the play's central story-line is top-heavy: two mates, one a TV writer, the other a disabled ex-soldier, ride flat together (Maurice Jarvis?), write a musical together (Lester and Lester in Livermoreland?), fall out over an intruding female with monumental marriage designs and a neat scene of where the power lies (Act II). By Act II, the TV writer has become a money magnet, radio rider is even down on his knees, and then... *po!* discovers old money themes now worth thousands. Plans full-scale production of bed-side musical, shares planner, so does he kills himself, money magnet now goes to remorse and schizophrenia. Though the performers, particularly John Noble and Kathryn Fisher, worked hard and conscientiously with this, the material deflated them. Brian Debuons

direction and the playing were mostly tight: the set seemed unnecessarily unwieldy though the three playing areas called for placed severe demands on the facilities of Theatre 82. Performers and director alike needed better material and as the evidence of this play for all its flaws, Bill Agg ought to provide some in the future.

Personal Postscript

It is not often that a critic is treated with the respect that he may feel is his due. However, this particular case was hardly appreciative of the humble request lodged in the foyer after the show: from one who should be thankful, but who is called Alan Lovett. Not trusting to my ability to read the programme he pointed out that he had been inadvertently present (Oh, ye of little faith!) I was, in fact, mentally two steps ahead of him. Alan Lovett is one of Adelaide's most under-rated performers and his reading of the role of the down-modern, dim, yet curiously astute George was the best acting on view in the evening and a little gem of a performance.

Brecht in Adelaide

THE MOTHER CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE

by Barry Fflew

The Mother by Bertolt Brecht, music Hans Koller. *Tropeus* at the Red Shed, Adelaide, Sat. 10/10/81 7.30pm.

Director: David Young, Musical Director: Michael Ardison, Musical Master: Peter Michael Mailey, Cost: The Editors Anderson, Paula Carter, Peter Dunn, Jan Hensley, Ross Currie, Gerald Holburn, Ron Harding, David Kirk, Wendy Madigan, Geoff Revell, Sue Swenson, Rodie Taithe (Performers).

Tropeus's production at the Red Shed is excellent. The Koller score which maintains such tensions between the music and the lyric verse produces some of the best scenes in the play. Michael Ardison and Michael Mailey, who together arranged the score, and the ensemble have really combined to make the songs work. The play relentlessly surges forward. The direction by David Young is sympathetic to the overall dialectic and political dimensions of the work and is very conducive to some superb ensemble playing. The design by Cath Carlson is suitably sparse, but then the Red Shed needs little for Brecht. Wendy Madigan as the mother, Pelagia Vlasova and Jan Firman as her son, Pavel Vlasov gave some outstanding performances. When Pavel sings alone in the prison after the visit by Pelagia, of the power of the

State and its ability to oppress and enslave workers, many agreed in the audience tonight it was great theatre.

Probably the most successful scenes were those that took place in the home of Nikolai Vlasovchikov, the teacher — a fine performance from David Kirk. The scene in which he began to teach the peasant friends of Pelagia to read and write combined the political, the social and the personal in one image, while allowing the wisdom beneath the humour to show through. Peter Dunn played all his scenes well, but particularly that of Vasil Yefimovitch, the butcher. Gerald Holburn as both Natasha Vlasovna, a revolutionary worker and Vera Simeonova, the landlady, Geoff Revell, who amongst other parts plays Pavel Sigonin, Christina Anderson as Masha Khalarov, and Ron Hering as Ivan Vozovochikov and Smirnov were all very good. Michael Mailey's piano accompaniment helped make it an excellent production. There are very few plays worth getting on after fifty years. Brecht's *The Mother* is certainly amongst those few for its politics and the politics of today.

At the same time as *The Mother* was being performed, there was more Brecht on view in Adelaide, this time a production by the Acting Company of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, written in 1944.

In the form of a parable, the play is concerned with the question of proletarian morality and the problems of proletarian justice. Whether we can make decisions between ourselves after free and equal discussion or whether those decisions are made for us and then imposed from above depends on what kind of society we live in. In the Prologue to *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* Brecht shows the workings of proletarian justice of an exploring class. In "The Story of the Judge" and "The Chalk Circle" Arkad, the peasant judge, reveals the internal workings of the law as he is motivated ultimately by financial self-interest, sexual self-interest when and political opportunism — not to mention the all-pervading desire to protect private property.

It was a pity that The Acting Company whose ensemble work was at times so very good should have decided to cut the Prologue which is critically important as an introduction to the parable and to make further cuts to "The Story of the Judge" which tend to remove the questions of morality and justice in the centrally important case and replace them with minor issues. Politically *The Mother* is a much more direct play, but *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* has the potential to be exceedingly relevant in the very political matters of justice and injustice.

THEATRE/VIC



STAGE REP.
NINA MASON
SPUNNER

Troubled domesticity

A DOLL'S HOUSE A BOY FOR YOU, A GIRL FOR ME

by Colin Duckworth

A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen, adapted by Ray Lawrie, Melbourne Theatre Company, Andersons Theatre, Vic. Opened 2 July 1983

Boy for You, a Girl for Me by Ian Smith, Melbourne Theatre Company, Andersons 2, Vic. Opened 7 July 1983

Director: Ray Lawrie, *designer:* Peter Cooke, *choreographer:* Tony Burdette, *Cost:* Nina Mason, Helen Davies, John, Nigel Knight, Peter Rudolph Day, *Technical Manager:* Andrew Christian, *Light:* Kate Wright, *Set:* Richard Peter Cooke, *Cost:* Kate Wright, *Music:* Charles Hingorani, *Cost:* Nina Mason, *Production:* (Production)

A Boy for You, a Girl for Me by Ian Smith, Melbourne Theatre Company, Andersons 2, Vic. Opened 7 July 1983

Director: Judith Alexander, *designer:* Mark Weger, *choreographer:* Amanda Muggleton, *lighting designer:* James Lewis

Cost: Jane Williams, Beverly Dunn, Leon Williams, Frederick Parslow, Peter Rogers, Ian Sedberry, *Music:* Ian Grant, *Amanda Muggleton* (Production)

This year's HSC students have reasons to be grateful to the MTC for staging the outstanding example of Eng. Lo (other notable ones frequently assessed by English studies being by Strindberg, Tchekhov, and even Ibsen). Post-HSC spectators might be a little less pleased, for it was probably with an eye on the youngsters, who rarely get realists, that Ray Lawrie opted for a melodramatic rendering with strong but rather one-dimensional characterisation.

This certainly brought out the issues, loud and clear, to an audience that on occasions cooed and sighed, so great was their involvement with the plight of poor little Nora at the hands of her villainous husband. Ibsen's controlled plot and his determination to put complex social issues in simple black-and-white dramatic terms often come across to the kind of moral confirmation one associates with melodrama. The only question is, should the audience be accepted or subtly deflected?

It all hinges on the characterisation given to Nora and Torvald. The text gives many clues that Nora is still a girl — but not a baby doll. After ten years of married life and three children by a normally-seen husband, she is still a gaily young thing, but she cannot look and sound as though she has been auditioning for a remake of a Shirley Temple helpline, and then consciously torn into a mature and purposeful woman in the final scene. Vivien Davies depended too much on the schoolgirliness that had served her so well in *Over a Cathedral* — and the schoolroom coyness was reinforced by John Stanton's personification of Torvald at a cross between ranting schoolmaster, screaming vicar and snappish sergeant-major.

How has Nora put up with this peevish banker for ten years without showing his true balance up his deficit? Surely, to make their attachment plausible, Torvald has to treat her with beings, amenable forbearance, at times seeking but always sympathetic to a wayward, favourite young girl? The dashing to pieces of Nora's idealised image of Torvald (her potential saviour) and her violent volte-face, lost

despite the twin's colourfulness of the role.

Charles Tongwell's warm and affectionate Rank was a delight.

An equally troubled domestic setting is presented to us by Ian Smith in *A Boy for You, a Girl for Me*, which welds together two disparate themes: the vaguely incestuous longing of a mother and father for their son and daughter, who have (understandably) fled the nest and keep their whereabouts



Director: Judith Alexander, *designer:* Mark Weger, *choreographer:* Amanda Muggleton, *lighting designer:* James Lewis

hidden, and the rip-off scene of the dance lesson business.

We never know if the children really exist. We could be in Alfie country. Peter and Heather might just be the phantoms of a childless couple, like George and Mamma's son.

When son Peter (or whoever) wanders, Jane and Leon a free set of dance lessons, plot and counter-plot develop slowly and in the first act, take about ten minutes too long. But when the apparently predictable rip-off conspiracy by the ineffective (other) Peter and his partner, Mango, is countered by the lively machinations of those who were supposed to be the middle-aged victims, an atmosphere of genuine menace takes over from the uneasy and hesitant neo-absurdism of Act 1.

Beverly Dunn, in the central role, kept the action together by an unfussy mixture of menopausal nervous energy and daughter's dowdy civility. Ian Sedberry's infantile regression and Amanda Muggleton's switches from chaotic violence to sunny sales-talk showed her versatility. Frederick Parslow was amiable and bumbling, but was often responsible for the slow pace.



Vivien Davies (Nora) and Charles Tongwell (Mr Rank) in the MTC's A Doll's House. Photo: David Parker

much of their power and plausibility because of the lack of shading in their relationships. However, it was all lively and clear. It would be good to see John Stanton play Krogstad; he would have achieved the kind of strong, brooding menace that one missed in Peter Cooke, whose Nils was simply too meek and too easily won over by the Christians — a difficult and shantless part in which Kate Wilkin managed to keep our interest.

Dickins Dominates

THE BEN WRIGHT SHOW DEATH OF MINNIE POTIPHAR'S WIFE

by Suzanne Spenser

The Ben Wright Show by Barry Dickins, Icon Theatre, The Prism Theatre, Melbourne VIC. Opened July 8 1993.

Director: David Mason. Producer: John Timlin. Stage Manager: Catherine Pines. Design: Peter King. Original Music: Dennis Neale. Music and sound effects: Barry Dickins. Musical direction: Peter King. Cost: Ben Wright. Costumes: Helen, with Richard Neale. Lighting: Carol. Dance: Nick. Musician: O'Donnell. Josephine Niles, Peter King, Barry Dickins. (Photo:www)

Josephine's Role by Margot Ballin and *The Death of Minnie* by Barry Dickins. Operetta at The Playbox, Melbourne VIC. Opened July 10 1993.

Director: Peter Jordan. Designer: Neil Dennis. Stage Manager: Nicole Kelly.

Cost: Potiphar's Wife: Ann Friel. Musical: Markwick. Photo credit: John Friel.

If we can begin to talk of Post-Wave Australian Drama then at least in Melbourne in the eighties Barry Dickins is an icon. To date he has had productions in the three main theatre houses beginning with *Blissville Revolver* at La Mama and now *The Ben Wright Show* at The Prism and *Death of Minnie* at the Playbox and so it must only be a matter of time before he's being in our own theatrical lexicon.

With the production of *The Ben Wright Show* at the Icon Theatre all the Prism are finally able to see the "new" APC Ensemble in full flight after their abortive debut in *Reverberations*. Now that John Timlin has returned to his true place at the helm not only has the Prism been cleaned up (let alone purged), but a production under David Mason's direction has been got together of which no one need be ashamed. To walk into the Prism on the opening night of *The Ben Wright Show* was to enter a theatre again — the sense of resurrection and optimism was profuse.

In *The Ben Wright Show*, Barry Dickins has created an endearing image of Austral innocence in his idealisation of Ken — a man of the eighties, who says nothing and sees less. Ken is somewhere between Chaplin and The Blues, and in a sense he appeals for the author, then it is needed the lowest profile Mr Dickins has ever assumed. By making the main character silent and using the device of Len Teale (digitally the talking radio electric), Dickins will allow himself his favourite party trick (improvising Mr Homosexual) while for the first time successfully writing himself out of his work.

Placing a silent figure centre stage is potentially an extremely potent image,



Minnie O'Donnell (Left) in *The Ben Wright Show* APC

particularly when everyone else and him has no trouble talking, however in this production the dynamic which could arise from this confrontation did not, or at least did not to the extent which it should have. Then Ken and ultimately his plight remained shadowy and unexplored as Ken never really made the transition from Fool to Christ. Instead the characters around him — his family, friends and workmates and competing personalities came to assume greater weight than the writing could bear.

Adding for the most part remained at the level of caricature which was appropriate except that for most of the actors it was consciousness of their previous roles. Thus audiences unfamiliar with the work of Marilyn O'Donnell, Peter King and Jo White were not adequately fair to their performances, but for me it was only Richard Neale who created unique, particular creatures out of the many roles he took on, his portrayal of the malice book factory boss was a startling example of the possibilities of cheap cameo playing.

Peter King's design with its rolling props on castors and the beautiful Elk bed were as exciting as they were expensive of Dickins, however I was disappointed that the beautifully scalloped steel flairs were not utilised more. *The Ben Wright Show* was the most positive direction yet seen from the Ensemble, they have caught the boat and now we await the course into uncharted seas.

Meanwhile at The Playbox Ann Friel and Peter Green were doing the best possible with a rather pretentious and finally shallow piece of writing and throwing their brains and heads into a

something that bountifully rewarded imaginative interpretation. Both plays are dramatic iconographies for the female and women (*Josephine's Role*), but beyond that they are miles apart in attitude, sensibility, class and situation. *Potiphar's Wife* is one of today's winners who withers the vapours of its losers, while *Minnie* is a loser who calls the judge's bluff.

Ironically you come out of *Potiphar's Wife* feeling suicidal or at least cheated enough to feel like contemplating drastic action. And you come out of *The Death of Minnie* having witnessed suicide and yet feeling that life is even more worth living. For as much sympathy as one has with *Potiphar's Wife* at the beginning it is equally replaced by a feeling of intense criticism and ultimately with sheer boredom because the experience like the language in which it is expressed, is so thoroughly ornamented it looks and feels fake. It is not simply a matter of simple every day language language (necessarily being the locus of genuine expression and poetic or "artificial" language denoting fakery, because Dickins creates for his marvellous Minnie a language scuffed and ennobled with wit, imagery and resonance.

The Death of Minnie is the most sustained and interesting piece that Dickins has written this year, and I am beginning to feel that it, together with *Brick's Star* and *The Horror of The Suburban Nazim Strip* indicate that he has amongst Australian male playwrights an exceptional ability to create brilliant wonderful women railings who could partner Hubbard's equally wonderful mad men.



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Powerful and obscure

WILFRED GUTHMANN'S
IN RUINOUS ARES

by Catherine Peake

Theatre Australia is a play by Bruce Paltrow. In Ruinous Ares, Melbourne, Vic, 1985, Feb 11-19, 1986

Director: Roger Paltrow. Design: Peter Song. Music: Murray Nash. Hair: Michael Lightfoot. Props: William Clarke. Wardrobe: Peter Haines.

Cast: Norman: Stephen Rea. Sam: Patricia Lough. Sylvia: Nancy Black. Bill: Robert Williams. Pappa: Ed Harris. Michael: Michael Murphy.

(Ed Harris's name)

There are some kinds of theatre which subvert their subject despite all efforts to the contrary. By contrast, Roger Paltrow's plays seem to sign and then strive to be somewhat, explore the power of stereotyping and dramatic convention.

In general he is a playwright that never lets us lose sight of the artificiality and contrivance of his stage. His theatre is styled but written in a way that delivers, clarifies and, if it is also hard, normalises and reinforces.

Watching his most recent play, *Winfred Guthmann in Ruinous Ares*, it is the alternative of symbolic logic or the master chess game which springs to mind. This artificial work, *Winfred Guthmann in Ruinous Ares*, this play gives form to violence in black surface. Once again the results seem to be those of alienation and survival through love: neither the Polish poet and intellectual nor the traits from which takes its title, contribute very much in the way of class or its meaning.

Interspersed it is a play that tends to fall into a series of learned and usually darkly comic stunts. A grey man in a brown suit, a smiling, a bag of poisonous snakes, a noose and a TV all have their place in a script learned with philosophical ideas and literary references.

The general scenario of *Winfred Guthmann in Ruinous Ares* is complete with soldiers, rule, and finally, a "total system" and an old man, all of whom are caught up in such pronounced stereotypes of pain, surrender and terror, that they inevitably raise the larger issues of good and evil, sexuality and death.

Under the direction of the playwright, the play is paced so that the first three scenes, unfolding in slow motion, stir up violence, persecution and mass. The characters are not composed in any depth but behave more like symbols for the demonstration of abstract emotions and ideas, and their interaction is calculated to

underscore the familiar by constantly dedicating gestures and colloquialisms from their "natural" context.

This version of the play is both powerful and obscure and is played with a confidence and skill that is extraordinary. Any critical function the energy of the piece, specialised by William Pappa, charismatic "total system," brings in the name and the freedom between idea and stage is much too rapid to be coherent.

The play ends with a confusing series of symbols and archetypes. The old man is introduced with a racial spike, instantly changed and William Clarke, formerly the timid and sensitive man is suddenly

transformed into an unstable, violent and frightful.

At La Mama, *Winfred Guthmann in Ruinous Ares* is staged on something like a Peter Brook's pace set. The design is spare and sophisticated and an excellent last for setting which is both dense and remarkably explicit about its own labels of mind, collage and dramatic operation.

The audience and virtually the playwright, was sometimes at a loss to know what the play was about. But we were also intrigued by its heavy, provocative quality, its wit and its striking deviation from the conventions of plot, character and narrative sequence.



Nancy Black and Robert Williams in *Winfred Guthmann in Ruinous Ares*. Photo: Stefan Brown.

THEATRE/WA



STREET STUP
JOHN O'BRIEN

Might have worked better

LOOSE

By Cliff Gilliam

Cost: In. Dir: John Samuel Heath, Company: Playhouse Theatre Inc. (O'Brien left in 1980). Director: Stephen Barry. Design: Gary Fyfe. Lighting: Douglas Old. Props: Margaret George. Props: David.

Cost: Michaela Moore Ogden. For: Jenny McVie. And: Janet McVie. Music: David Hirsch. Director: Trevor West. Producer: Frank Johnson. (N. reviewed)

There can be little doubt that of the three plays written by Joe Orton before he was murdered in 1967, *Loose* is the one which will keep him in the commercial theatre repertoire. *Loose* is a brilliantly staged piece, which relies on extraordinary capacity to shock without outraging which Orton had first endowed with

Convincing Mr Bloom

Loose adds to that, however a plot cobbled together in later days from the controlled horrors of farce and the wilful memories of the detective mystery, reinforcing the comic bleakness of its track with coffee and unlit cigarettes with some really swinging satire against the London Metropolitan Police (although any boys in blue will do). As script then, *Loose* sparkles with possibilities for performers and director alike. Alas, too few of those possibilities have been realised in The Playhouse production.

The single most important reason for the manifold disappointments of this production was voiced long ago by Orton himself, when he candidly warned that "... if *Loose* is played as no more than farce, it won't work." It's true that *Loose* owes much, formally to the conventions of farce, but it won't do to reduce it to farce alone, particularly if such reduction involves performers "mugging up" to the audience to alert them to the upcoming "funny bits". Nearly all the comedy comes from the fundamental incongruity of the manner-of-fact attitude of nearly all the characters (the grotesqueness, mayhem and straight forward old-fashioned farce, in which they are so intimately involved). The key must be "deadpan", quite straight and straight through.

It's no use attempting laugh lines

literally all right, as nearly all the cast was wont to do. Not only does such an approach insult the intelligence of the audience (always assuming that one's audience is possessed of sufficient collective intelligence to recognise an insult) but much more importantly one slows the pace, forces the laughs and cheapens the play.

In the light of this uncharacteristic approach (an evasive and ugly phenomenon, I'll admit, but rather less strange a charge than its simpler substance, is it not?) one could not expect (and did not get much in the way of) performance, even from Maureen Ogden and Jenny McVie whom one might have thought capable, experienced and glib in comedy as they are, of getting around the problem. Ogden's Mr McLeary was very disappointing, a characterisation too uniformly whining and further blunted by a fake Irish accent which swallowed up the sense of most of his lines. As Fay, Jenny McVie seemed very uneasy with the part's mixture of domestic lark and home loving home-help, so uneasy in fact that she resorted at times to playing the two parts in turn.

As Hal, Scott Macgregor simply gave off too great an impression of rude and bounding health, which was a little too incongruous for a lad who exercises only in brothels. There was in fact far too little,



both in his Hall and Gerald Hitchcock's Denno, of that frighteningly funny detachment (as of the aging soul) which Orson's script suggests. In the midst of many lost opportunities, however, Trevor Bond made the most of his as Titmouse, borrowing for that comic authoritarian just as many Cleopatra managements as he needed (including the famous Family "Forward lean") and proving (as small but) that he could retain the theater of them. A strong, if fact saving, performance.

I've probably been a little unfair to director Stephen Barry in this review since, despite my comments so far, his *Fast* did work, at least in terms of a warm reception by the audience. But then as I've already said it's a brilliant play, and will always work. Its jangle, saddled by the thought that it might have worked so much better that so much was wasted for the want of a little subtlety.

Gems here and there

IT WAS THE LARK

by Margot Lake

In the *Fast* in Ephraim Kishon's *Halo* in the Hall, *Fast* in the Hall, *Fast* in the Hall.

Director: Edgar Mitchell. Designer: William Dwyer. Music: Margaret. Michael. Shirley. Lighting: John. Noddy.

Cast: John, Victor, Lawrence, Rosemary, Peter, Rose, Rosemary, Peter, Lawrence, The Harbours, William. Shakespeare: Edgar Mitchell. (A Production)

This is Ephraim Kishon's first play to be produced anywhere in Australia (as the programme informs us), which seems surprising, considering his success overseas. He's a very funny writer, but a little gone a long way.

We are asked to imagine that Romeo and Juliet did not die in that tomb after all but are instead, in the thirtieth year of their marriage. They still argue fiercely about that bad of long ago — was it the lark or the nightingale? — and are generally sick to death of one another.

They are in a flat with kitchen above it, grossly. They live on Noodle and spring onions and Romeo, though described as a ballet teacher, seems to be unemployed, which means Juliet cannot afford a maid — a misfortune that has become her obsession.

Their warring interest in each other and their poverty are the managing of dramatic conflict. Romeo compares with Juliet's name, now seventy-five and companion to Juliet's rich but invalid mother, so kill the old woman discreetly,

with a view to inheriting her fortune, while Juliet has secret meetings with Friar Lawrence, (now eighty-nine, male and a proper), to mean about Romeo, who has fallen passionately in love with his hot-water bottle, called Lark.

Kishon introduces two new characters. Juliet's daughter Lucerna, an adolescent teenager in t-shirt and cut-off jeans, "Viviana Bontemps", and the ghost of William Shakespeare, who acts as referee in the domestic. Lucerna has eventually fallen in love with Lawrence and departs with her.

To add to the luxury of the situation there is some tricky doubling of roles. Juliet, Lucerna and the Nurse are all played by Rosemary Barr having a ball with alternating digests, shapes and accents (not to mention with the up-to-second timing of costume changes), while The Harbours humors about as an unbalancing Romeo one minute, and then immediately returns tottering and dithering as an improbably Danish Friar Lawrence. Only the Nurse is allowed to be uniquely herself, played by Edgar Mitchell in patchy party-style and gloriously tacky costume (black with strips of tinsel silver fringe).

The first half of the play is thoroughly enjoyable. Juliet is really-wound humorists (which turn out to be a strength) is replaced by a more suitable digress with. Kishon's pop-song — he does the washing-up singing "Mornadella Belladonna, if we only had a maid", Friar Lawrence persist in confusing Romeo with that repulsive Danish lad always roasting and dressed in black, the Nurse huge and lecherous, stopping the light fantastic with Romeo, as they are plotting the murder, Lucerna disappointed that Shakespeare didn't write "I could have danced all night" (dance-verse) and Shakespeare censoring in appropriate quotations from his better known works (after all, he owns the copyright).

In Act II the things that had initially been surprising and fresh seem facile: the comic situations seem forced and the literary allusions, particularly the discussion about the true author of *The Play*, become a bit tedious. Even so — the game will glaze here and there Juliet persists. Romeo's wife to the accompaniment of the watcher's curse from Macbeth, whereas Shakespeare gives Romeo some poetic "Found in the ear of Hamlet's father".

Of course it's oddly unfair to make comparisons but the relative aspects of a Shakespeare ending are out for the linguistic imagination of a Tom Stoppard. The present play succeeds with a handful of comic devices until they are stretched beyond their limits, and with some ruthless pruning it would probably turn into the thing it was intended to be.

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BY JUDITH
MILNE

Old and new

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pp 54.95

How quickly nostalgic sets in! The Independent Theatre in Sydney, in later years, was generally derided for its old-fashioned attitudes and programming. In this magazine Rita Champheus gave one of her most venomous and yet most virulent attacks on one of their retrograde productions of Shakespeare. And yet, almost as if the theatre closed people began looking back fondly on its struggles and triumphs. In so many fine companies it began years ahead of its time and finished rather behind its time—but in the case of the Independent that proved took more than forty years, when in Australian theatre is an exceptionally good thing. When (in a few months, no doubt) we begin to look back nostalgically on the Grand Old Days of the Old Time we shall not be thinking of such such an achievement. The successes of the Indie were truly, but the Independent struggled through decades when theatre was a much more risky undertaking than it is now.

Apart from a particular personal interest it was introduced to theatre through classes at the Indie as the leader age of that world it is good to see an old Independent show published by Curragh with an introduction by Denis Elliott himself (Alison Fitterer, to me). And like the Independent in 1948, *Rusty Hughes* was well ahead of its time. It is a relaxed realistic account of life among soldiers stationed at a Northern Territory supply depot during the Second World War, but it also has a knowledge of stressed a scorn for self-contradiction and a strong longing for peace and mood, and for life just going on which should have been more influential than they were. Its central

image of sitting around through a Don Season and into the War, waiting for Leave, has a lot of respect now, and it is a pity that the lack of a theatrical tradition then and the impact of the much more intentionally controlled *Rusty Hughes* is a minor.

In spite of its specific realisation, treated subject, *Rusty Hughes* is formally the most interesting play written before the 1940s. It is very laconic and unadorned in a way which perfectly reflects a common view of the Australian Character. It is theatrically effective in its humorous atmosphere and gentle acceptance of

Scenes Sewell charts the different attitudes of a father, a mother and their two sons to the political, social and economic forces which control their lives, and which include a non-famous group of the sort which many Australians, especially Queenslanders are somewhat anticipating. By giving a clear and realistic of individual lives, *Rusty Hughes* shows how, through the relationship between formal political processes and individual experience of them. This play has not the economy and precision of Denis Hughes' plays, with which it shares many concerns, but it has a brilliant final image from which it takes its title. We are outsiders, for the first time, it has stopped writing and the last scene effects of the rest of the play has revealed into a simple loud sound of war, as the old man stands and stares out to sea. The great sadness which the outside political struggle has brought to his life, makes this final vision of him, with his toy basket and berries, take very powerful. Sewell shows the clients and directors and sure touch of a very fine theatre writer.

Steve J. Spence, *Rusty Hughes* is an effective, dense of the corruption and power-mongering in "right" plays which we all now assume. *Rusty Hughes* and Sewell's play are both definitely post-November 11, 1935 Spence's play is a power game between a leading politician and a leading (poor) academic. The craftsmanship is so sure, and the tension and sense of the plot so excellently controlled that we completely forget whatever political meaning might have. The world of the play now casually and apparently corrupt that it is hard to take seriously, and yet it is obviously a serious subject.

John Bradley's *Archives*, according to Bill Hayden, who provides the Foreword to this volume "has a strength, perspective, born, back as an allegorical illustration of how self-making men who wanted to be free and free others, took command of a system they did not understand and therefore, could not control" which sums the play up better than I could. I find it very convincing. It is neither grounded in recognizable reality, nor set in its own created world. But it has a strong central visual image (albeit cinematic, rather than theatrical) and has some satisfying, because unperceived, moments of power.

I have never been to Brisbane, but I do think most is a good little theatre. If nothing else, this volume should contradict the assertion sometimes heard that all the best new plays go in the big state companies.



seriousness. It is to be hoped that this new publication will revive professional interest in the play.

Three Political Plays is one of three slightly artificial permanent volumes, vaguely linked by a theme (I used to have one called *Three Plays About Brisbane* (January). As Stephen Sewell points out "political plays" merely means "left-wing plays", and with the exception of his own, they were very radical. A more interesting point linking the plays is that they were all first produced at Brisbane's La Rose theatre—and if we get volumes of *Travesty Plays* and *Almost Free Plays* then surely we can have *La Rose Plays*.

The most interesting is by La Seydlitz. *The Fencer He Used on a Beach at the Sea*, which is a structure rather play. In a series of details human and moving,

ACT THEATRE

AND ARTS CENTRE (49 4767)

Theatre-in-Classroom

Canva by Phyllis Director: Paul Managhan 26, 27, 28, 30 September
CANBERRA THEATRE (49 7680)

Anna Jones's Women with Bonella
Flanagan 29, 30 September
PLAYHOUSE (49 6488)
NIDA

The Howard Pinner by Steve Gooch
Director: George Whaley, designer Kim
Webb 9 to 18 September
THEATRE 3 (47 4225)

Canberra Repertory Society: Arabians
and *the Love* by George Bernard Shaw
Director Pam Rosenberg 17 September to
early October. Wednesdays to Saturdays
REID HOUSE THEATRE
BOOKSHOP (47 6381)

The Agave Company (founded by John
Ramsay) in schools and the community
My Aard Year 5/6 in schools

Canberra Youth Theatre
October 1986. *House* by Dylan Thomas 11
to 26 September
Foyle's Gallery

Passer from the *Ben Jonson* directed by
the company, director: Carol Woodrow
25 September, Thursdays to Saturdays 19
December

For further contact: Margaret Wylie on
433 057 for 433 450 for 671

NSW THEATRE

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (357 9211)

School Theatre: The Arabians (Australian
folklore for infants, primary and
secondary, metropolitan area from
September 22)

Jon Carter (classical guitar for primary and
secondary. *Runaway* from September 22
The Road Book (throughout) (apparel drama
for infants, primary and secondary, South
Coast from September 22)

Adult: *Tyrone*, *Flannery*, *Lebanon*

Western Districts: *Reveries* and *South
Coast* from September 8
AXIS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS
(669 8202)

Court House Hotel, Taylor Square
The After Seven Show by Tony Hawley
and Malcolm Frawley, directed by Peter
Merrish with music by Gary Searcy. Until
September 8

Pure in the Desert (book by Tony Hawley,
Peter Merrish and Malcolm Frawley
directed by Malcolm Frawley, with music
by Gary Smith. Commences September
11)

BONDI PAVILION THEATRE

Curve Film: Four (book by Neil Simon,
directed by Maxwell Duvall-Hornum-Sims,
with Valerie Neame. Until September
13)

BREAD AND CIRCUS COMMUNITY THEATRE (28 5688)

The Lightbulbs (Theatre Restaurant, *The
Up The Mine And Down The Spine* (book
by Bread and Circus. director: Frank
Barber. Fridays and Saturdays)

CANBERRA THEATRE (235 7422)

The Acker Play (a play September 19 &
20)

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (629 8877)
Cold Storage by Ronald Robertson directed
by Haven Galigni, with Lee Kitchman,
Brian Young and Jennifer Barber.
Throughout September

FIRST STAGE THEATRE COMPANY

(82 1493)
The Movers of Theatre-in-Classroom, *Two*
by Billy Baxter, directed by Chris Lewis,
with Angela Bennet, Doreen Corrigan and
Gary Baxter. Training to schools
throughout September

FRANK STRAIN'S 'BUILT N' BUSH' THEATRE RESTAURANT (357 4627)

Black Bird a musical (from the turn
of the century to today) with Neil Murphy,
Barbara Wyllison, Garth Hedges, Neil
Hedges, and Helen Loran, directed by
George Carden. Throughout September
HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE
(212 7441)

The Best Little Whore House in Texas by
Larry King and Peter Mazurson, directed
by Jerry Todd with Lorraine Bayle,
Allan Sander and Moss Richardson
Commences September 13

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (28 2336)

Goodman (Opera by Benoit Boquet,
directed by Anne Neume with Sue
Crackland, Beverly Blankenship, Allen
McFadden, Mylene Morgan, Fanni
Garfield, David Wood, Car Lotman
Throughout Sept

THE KING O'MALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (912 6502)

The Stubbs Theatre: David Phelan's *Goats*
By Adamson (book for Boys by Bob
George, directed by Lex Mance, with

Marilyn Dwyer, Sean Scully, John
Hanson, Robert Hughes, Ross Spence and
Anne Gray. September 1-29
KIRKSWILL PUB THEATRE
(92 1425)

Kimble Hotel: Missen's Point
The After Seven Show by Perry Quanton
and Paul Clubb directed by Perry
Quanton, with Leonard Smith, Michael
Ferguson and Ross Holman. Throughout
September

LES CHURCH PRESENTATIONS

(358 5479)
Colony, a programme of folk songs and
stories (throughout) colonial Australia
derived and performed by Colin Douglas
and Tony Sauer by guests, primary and
secondary. NSW territory throughout
September. *Madison* (play. *Thirteen*
programme of historical music devised by
Michael Freedland for infants, primary and
secondary. Metropolitan area throughout
September)

LIVING FLAME LUNCHTIME THEATRE (357 1200)

AMP Theatre, Circular Quay
Black Gate by Elyse Marcus directed by
Michael Martin-Evans, with Felicity
Gordon and Robert Dunn. Commences
Sept 3
MARIAN STREET THEATRE
(84 3166)

The Broadmeadow by W Somerset
Maugham, directed by Bob Clibbage, with
Aldair Duncan, Lynn Rainbow, Reg
Gibson, Michael Gow, Phillip Baker,
Eddie LeMay, Penny Cook and Tony
Foot

THE MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (255 680)

Drama Theatre, SOH
The Wagon Pushing by Norman Lindsay,
directed by Richard Bradshaw. Until
September 6

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (669 8225)

Ever Linger by Mrs Henry Wood, directed
by Alton Harvey, with Alton Harvey,
Bernadine Houghen, Mal Carmichael and
Chrysanne Cannon. Until September 6
MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (677 6542)
At the Top, a musical review with The
Toppings family and Lorne Desmond.
Throughout September

NEW THEATRE (519 3405)

My Car's Not 'My Own' 'Paw' by Dana
Lo, directed by Jerome Levy. Until early
September
White Knight by Bill Bryson, directed by
Joe Williams. Commences mid
September

NIMROD THEATRE (699 3903)

Upstart: Awaly (the Island by Louis
Nevins, directed by Ned Arnold with
Dean Sheering, Marnie Vaughan and
Judy Davis. Until September 14)
Downstart: Street Performer in Chicago
by David Mamet, directed by Rex

Becher Commences September 17
Last Night Shows *Sleep No More* Rough with Ward, Johnson, Rakea and Curtis September 5 and 6

Feeling in Love Agnew devised and played by Jan Caswell and Elizabeth Drake Commences September 26

NSW THEATRE OF THE DEAF
(137) 1200

The "Sisters" Josselyn for primary schools and *The Unbroken World of Jingles* for use for secondary schools, both directed by Ian Watson, with Nola Lotties, David London, Colin Allen, Bryan Jones and Rosemary Innes Murrumbidgee area throughout September

Q THEATRE (047) 26 5231

The Mooncoming by Harold Pinter, until September 13 at Phearth, September 17-20 at Orange and September 24-27 at Bankstown

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY
(069) 25 2652

Grues directed by Peter Barclay September 12-16

STYMOOD CENTRE (042) 6555

York Theatre *Carnegie* from September 13 to 21

Everest Theatre *James Joyce's* *Wiseacre* written and edited by Fionnuala Flanagan directed by Burgess Meredith with Fionnuala Flanagan and Robert O'Hernan September 2-28

SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (088) 3446

Free drama workshops on weekend includes playbuilding, mime, dance, puppetry, design, radio and video *Shopfront Caravan* touring city schools with *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare and *Chickadee* and *The Tale* first created by the cast and directed by Errol Bray Youth Theatre Showcase *Kinetic Energy* Dance Company September 3-5 *Shopfront Caravan's* production of *The Tempest* September 11, 12, 19 and 20

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY (203) 881
Drama Theatre, SOH
Circles de Bergeres by Edmond Rostand translated by Louis Nowra, directed by Richard Wharmby, with John Bell, Helen Morse and Andrea McFarlane Until September 2

The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare, directed by Mick Rodger with Jennifer Clarr, Janet Ems, Miss Phiggo, Carol Raye and Robin Ramsey Commences September 18

THEATRE ROYAL (231) 5111

There is Nothing Our Song by Neil Simon, directed by Phil Cusack, with Jackie Warner and John Waters Throughout September

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA (203) 881

The Wages of Fear by Maxwell, conducted by Richard Bortynge and produced by John Copley *Moscow Lovers* by Puccini, conducted by William Reed and produced

by John Copley *Lassos* Larraeusman by Donizetti, conducted by Richard Bortynge and produced by John Copley *The Barber of Seville* by Rossini, conducted by Peter Seymour and produced by John Cox *Pro Duella* by Auster, conducted by Richard Bortynge and David Krum and produced by John Copley

GAY THEATRE COMPANY (157) 5142
Waynate Chapel Theatre, 29 Hughes St Kings Cross Spring Stage by Colin Spencer, director, John Tasker, designer, Anthony Balaban To Sept 26

For further contact *Circle Four* on (07) 260 869 1000

QLD THEATRE

ARTS THEATRE (06) 2441

When The Barber Saw by Joe Orton director Leon Hutchinson *Ward and Son* To Sept 13

The Merry Go Round Wins Round by Barbara Stollmich director, Barbara Stollmich, designer, Michael Morris Sept 22-Oct 4

BRISBANE ACTORS' COMPANY (221) 9911

Phone 349 1679 for details

LA WHITE THEATRE (36) 1620

Travels by Steve Sewell, director Malcolm Haylock To Sept 13

Legend Of King O'Malley by Biddy and Ellis, director Malcolm Haylock Sept 18-Oct 18

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (221) 9988

On Tour Queensland Theatre Company *Overstage* by Ira Levin, director, Peter Duncan with Tony Lagermont, Frank Lloyd and Barbara Stephens

Accommodated by Nick Hall, director, Lloyd Nelson South Australian Department of Education presents Bruce Raymond's *Pushed Away*

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (221) 3881

Dariusle Elder by Richard Harris, director, Alan Edwards, designer, Graeme Macdon 27

DANCE

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

(221) 3777

The Australian Ballet presents *Anna Karenina* Sept 3-8

QUEENSLAND BALLET COMPANY (371) 1879

Schools Theatre Five One Act Ballets

Pas De Deux, choreographer, Ted Miller, *After The Ball*, choreographer, Anita Tappe *Flower Festival*, choreographer, August Beersenville *Swing Parade*, choreographer, Don Asker *So And On*, choreographer, Harold Collins Sept 24-27

OPERA

QUEENSLAND OPERA COMPANY

(221) 3777

Her Majesty's Theatre

Melinda by Friedrich Von Flatau, producer John Thompson designer Allan Linn, conductor Graeme Young Sept 20, 26, 30 Oct 2-4

Don Pasquale by Donizetti producer, John Milvan, conductor, Georg Tintre designer, Tom Loughran Sept 25, 27 Oct 1-3

For further contact *Don Asker* on (221) 111

SA THEATRE

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRES (223) 8400

Circle Arts Centre Young script writers workshop Sept 8-13

ARTS THEATRE

Angus St *Fraser Bendy* by Peter Yeldham and David Churchill debuts, Michael Morley Sept 21-Oct 4

CORE THEATRE COMPANY

Touring Allen Lyons's *Agatha*, a play about unemployment and *Superman and Flasher Show* a play about the politics of nuclear and solar energy Available for schools and community groups

MAGNIE THE TEAM (30) 5150

Murrumbidgee schools *Academic Power*, *Unit For Sale* *In Love Mr. Three Affairs*

The Ball and Antelope Sept 13-Nov 10

Q THEATRE (223) 9651

89 Hables St *Five Can't Talk to Each You* by George Kaufman and Moss Hart, director Barry Hill Sept 6-27

STATE THEATRE COMPANY

(30) 5151

Playhouse The Man From Mulamog by Dorothy Hewitt, director, Kevin Palmer, designer, Neil Russell Sept 1-8

When The Barber Saw by Joe Orton director, Kevin Palmer, designer, Mick Entisher Sept 12-Oct 4

Theatre 62 *Pyrrhus*, *Forsters of Time* by William Shakespeare, director, Nick Enright, designer, Richard Robson Sept 3-6

Producers by Stephen Sewell, director, Nick English, designer, Richard Roberts Sept 10-Oct 4

THEATRE GUILD (22 4404)

Acting Company: Country (role of Mount Gambier, Lantieri, Wyllie, Kangaroo Island, Swede, Swede, Swede)

Theatre Workshop: *WineAnd*

IRON-PE (21 0764)

At the Red Bird: *Alfredie Rousselle* by Herman Claris, director, David Young Sept 1-26

For further contact: *Robert Bell* on 222 6668

TAS

THEATRE

POLYGON THEATRE COMPANY (34 8018)

Drama: *Stations, TCAE: *He's A Giver* People*, director, Allen Harvey Sept 17-20, 24-27

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY (23 5359)

In rehearsal throughout Sept

THEATRE ROYAL (34 6266)

4th: *Four Last* with Stuart Wagstaff Sept 1-15

DANCE

THEATRE ROYAL (34 6266)

Sydney Dance Company Sept 17-20

For further contact: Anne Campbell on (043) 67 4478

VIC

THEATRE

ALEXANDER THEATRE (54 32826)

The Bakers Players: *Prater Of Peacocks* by Gilbert and Sullivan Sept 27-Oct 4

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING

GROUP (34 3315)

From Theatre: A new ensemble show: *Cloud Nine* by Caryl Chessell, director, Peter King Throughout Sept

Back Theatre: *Danger Of Pyrexia* by Jean Pierre Mignion Sept 28

ARENA THEATRE (24 9687)

Chapel: *Producers* by Dorothy Hewett, director Steve Wallace Sept 4-12

Touring Schools: *The Whole The Agony*

Thing That Ever Died by Ken Kesey Throughout Sept

Touring: Lower Primary: *Where To Turn* by Helen Degoutin

Community Access Workshops: Saturday afternoon and Monday nights

ARTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (329 4855)

Age Dancer Song in Colonial folk tradition with Michelle and Mike Jackson

The Magna Proving from the original folk story by Norman Lindsay, by the Marionette Theatre of Australia

Throughout Sept

COMEDY THEATRE (162 3253)

The Playbox Theatre Company presents *Adult Party's* Pam Gers, director, Murray Copland with Joanne Lowe Throughout Sept

COMEDY CAFE

Brunswick St, Eureka Original comedy entertainment with Rod Quantock

DRAMA RESOURCE CENTRE

(347 5649)

Touring Schools: *THE Team* presents *For Or Not To D* a comic-book melodrama

On the transition that students face when leaving school to join the work force

FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (41 3721)

Missing Persons Present: *Forever*, director, Joe Baker with Agnieszka Sach, Jesse Macgregor, Tim O'Sculley and Simon Langford Throughout Sept

MER MAJESTY'S (663 3210)

Evans, director, Harold Prince, Choreographer Larry Fuller Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, Musical director, Peter Cawley, Lyrics, Tim Rice with Jennifer Murphy, Peter Carroll, John O'Malley Throughout Sept

LA MAMA THEATRE (347 6083)

In One Act A musical event with Dominique De Clario Sept 5-7

Run by Colin Ryan From Sept 11

LAST LAUGH THEATRE

RESTAURANT (419 6235)

Downstairs: *The King Sam Whistler* A Country and Western send-up comedy Sept 8-10

Upstairs: Show changing weekly

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (634 4000)

Altman: *The Matchmaker* by Thornton Wilder, director, Simon Chivers, designer, James Redwood, with Steven Davies, Maggie Knight, Charles Trugeth, and Peter Cartlan Throughout Sept

Basil Street: *In Dan Bound* by Ron Elvika, director, Judith Alexander, designer, Peter Cooke, with Margaret Cameron, Marlene Edwards, Bob Mordman, Ray Lawler, Tim Hughes, David Ramsbottom and Alex Longman Throughout Sept

Adrian: *The Man* by Jean Genet, director, Elizabeth Alexander, with Ann Fordchery, Linden Wilkinson and Ann Charlson

MURRAY RIVER PERFORMING GROUP (31 7615)

Albury: *The D Fell For Above Mr. a* Pub-Club show with Robert Farmer Throughout Sept

NATIONAL THEATRE (534 6231)

Get Run a comedy with Reg Gorman and Judith Roberts From Sept 19

PALAIN THEATRE (534 6631)

Clifford Hooley and Playbox Theatre Company present *Archers Of China* with the Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe Sept 18-27

PLAYBOX THEATRE COMPANY (635 4881)

Upstairs: *Barred Chick* by Sam Shepard, director, Roger Pulvers, with Linda Davies, Robin Cunnings, John Arnold, Geoffrey Clendon, Michelle Stuyver, and William Glath To Sept 12

Dead Parrot by David Malet, director, William Glath, with Malcolm Robertson Also playing: *Half Box* by David Edgar Sept 15-Oct 18

UNIVERSAL THEATRE (419 4772)

Swan by Barrie Oakley, and *Swallow & A* *Wish* *Record* by Anton Chekhov, director, Neil Armfield, with Max Gilkes Sept 3-Oct 2

UNION THEATRE (347 4188)

Richard III by William Shakespeare, director, David Kendall Sept 4-13

WEST COMMUNITY THEATRE (370 3336)

Gals, a song and dance performance by Linda Waters, for Community women's groups Also playing: *Marker Asens* a travelling Pub Show with Ian Macdonald and Brownwyn Barnes

AMATEUR THEATRES

Bass Theatre Group (762 4462)

Clayton Theatre Group (878 1072)

Hoddeburg Rep (48 2262)

Melburn Theatre Co (211 6020)

Parkville Theatre (42 8237)

DANCE

NATIONAL THEATRE (534 6231)

The National Folk Dance Company, director, Madeline Marina Berrowsky Sept 9-13

OPERA

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA

(61 2661)

Touring with Victorian Arts Council: *Argonauts*, director, Peter Jordan, conductor, Richard Drott with John Wood, Rosemary Boyle, Geoffrey Harris

For further contact: Constance Asquith on 267 1668

WA THEATRE

THE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

(323 4366)

The Nanking Anzabata Troupe of China
Sept 5-6

THE HAYMAN THEATRE (350 7026)

The Devils by John Whiting, director,
Steve Jodrell Sept 11-27

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE (321 6284)

Crossed Man/Amos by Roger Epton,
director, Peter Williams, with Jane Sater
and John Hamblin Sept 9-27

THE WHOLE IN THE WALL

(381 3439)

Daughter Of The Rubbish Dub Show
director, Mike Morris To Sept 6

Youth Workshop: The Audiences director,
Peter Morris Sept 9-15

No Exit by Jean Paul Sartre, director,
Edgar Mitchell Sept 17-Oct 11

THE NATIONAL THEATRE (325 3200)

Straw Hat by Pinter, director, Stephen
Barry Sept 16-Oct 11

Expensive Japanese by Jason Lindsay,
director, Marian McNaghen, with Nola
Punnett To Sept 15

THE REGAL (381 1557)

Private Lives by Noel Coward, director,
Edgar Mitchell, with Edward Woodward
and Michele Dotrice To Sept 20

THE UNIVERSITY THEATRES

(380 3460)

Oranges Thorns Moxie And Scarlet
Sept 1,2,4,5,6

Dolphin Theatre: The Affairs Of Gwynne
And On Man In The Moon Marygold by
Paul Zindel, director, Hal Davies Sept 5-20

DANCE

WA BALLET COMPANY

In residence Mt Lawley College Sept 6-13

OPERA

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE

(321 6284)

The Process Of The Guard Gilbert and
Sullivan Society To Sept 6

For artists contact Joan Andros on
269 6679

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THESPIA'S PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 15.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Across:

- 1 City of the little lad's curse (8)
- 3 Lawrence is in the concert, for the time being (1,3)
- 9 Aroma upsetting? Never, lad! (8)
- 10 Strange man I refuse to allow back in the world (4)
- 12 Alternatively, trade in endurance test (8)
- 13 Chase from whom were the of (8)
- 15 Success-story at play makes you leave, cruised (12)
- 18 Little piece at which old French now an exclamation at the sea (4,3,3)
- 23 Belonged more camp will get supplies (8)
- 24 Tack on a very soft touch (8)
- 25 Inadequate companion nevertheless returns to cigarette case (8)
- 27 Soft meadow chair can be agreeable (8)
- 28 Belied with footwear (8)
- 29 Asian great brother Noel and Dora (8)

Down:

- 1 "It is a dying lamp, a falling shewer, a breaking" (Shelley) (4)
- 2 It's denounced, we hear, but go on anyway (8)
- 3 Spy Tent in chains (7)
- 4 Legs involved in taking, perhaps (4)
- 5 The love of languages (7)
- 7 Rhyming offspring? (8)
- 8 Monkey for two to train (8)
- 11 Fund leader of the Welsh craying and jump (7)
- 14 Heavily follow has one account (7)
- 16 Southern occurs dangerous to partners? (8)
- 17 Scoured through a habit round the county town (8)
- 19 Article I put up with and admire (7)
- 20 Give a reason for one formerly ugly (7)
- 27 She and the American neither are making sweet music (8)



Last month's answers:

The winner of last month's crossword was J.B. Finamore of Warrell Hopton, Gld. The first correct entry drawn on September 25 will receive one year's free subscription to Theatre Australia.